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THE RED FUGITIVE

BY
H. L. SETH

Third Revised & Enlarged Edition by

JAGAT S. BRIGHT, M. A.

With a Prologue

BY
MAHATMA GANDHI

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PEASANT LEADERS

Mr. and Mrs. Jai Prakash Narain, the two dauntless advocates of Congress Socialist Party photographed recently at Delhi on way to Patna.

Shri Jaiprakash Narain is no ordinary worker. He is an authority on Socialism. It may be said that what he does not know on Western Socialism, nobody else in India does. He is a born fighter. He has forsaken all for the sake of the deliverance of his country. His industry is tireless. His capacity for suffering is not to be excelled.

M. K. Gandhi

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

I HAVE had the pleasure to revise, redraft, and recast the Third Edition of the *Red Fugitive* in its present form. Shri Jai Prakash Narain, the stormy petrel of the Indian politics, deserves to be better known than he is. Even though he has long acted as a red rag to the British Bull, there are very few politicians greener than Jai Prakash, and even Mahatma Gandhi, the most uncompromising critic of violence, has acknowledged the greenness and glory of his democratic accomplishments.

Personally, I am not in favour of this book being called *The Red Fugitive*. It does justice neither to Jai Prakash—nor to Indian police ! Mr. Narain is a very spirited servant of starving society, but he is very far from being a red revolutionary. If I have had my way, I would have called him the Green God rather than the Red Rebel.

J. S. B.

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CHAPTER I

How Red is The Red ?

How red is the Red Fugitive ? Shri Jai Prakash Narain is neither "red" nor a "fugitive." He is as well-behaved a prisoner of His Majesty the King-Emperor as any other well-disciplined Congressman. And if we call him the Red Fugitive, it is because we love him a little too much. We label him "red", in the same sweet spirit in which we dub a little lively spirited boy as "rebel." Our pet name is born out of sheer affection, an overflow of feelings, an outpouring of the soul. Being the youngest of the Congress leaders, he has received the largest measure of affection and admiration for his warmth of enthusiasm in the noble cause of nationalism.

Noble Narain ! That is how I would like to address him. "Narain is no ordinary worker !" That is no ordinary tribute. And it is a tribute by no ordinary man. That is the homage which Great Gandhi has paid to Noble Narain ! The Red Fugitive is an authority on the red philosophy. "It may be said," says Mahatma Gandhi, "that what he does not know on Western Socialism nobody else

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in India does." That is a great appreciation by the greatest man. And the Mighty Mahatma does not sell his gilt-edged certificates for a twopence. If his mere autograph is worth five-rupees, such a rare recommendation may fetch a million dollars !

Noble Narain has duly paid this price. He has paid it in kind if not in coins. "He is a born fighter !" says Gandhiji. We have heard of born poets, but born patriots ! That is a very rare specimen of modern humanity.

"He has forsaken all," says Gandhiji, "for the sake of the deliverance of his country." What great price can a priceless man pay ? "His industry is tireless," says Gandhiji. If Narain wanted to be a millionaire, rather than a martyr, he could have become a merry monarch. Verily the road to riches is rosy while the zigzag path of patriotism is strewn with thorns.

And what is more ? And this is the most important. "His capacity," says Gandhiji, "for suffering is not to be excelled." Noblest nationalist, Noble Narain !

If "*Jai Prakash Narain !*" means "Hail to thee, O Manifestation of God !" I have not the slightest doubt that Jai Prakash Narain is true to his name. He does manifest within himself the

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Promethean, inextinguishable, unquenchable, and undying flame of eternity.

There never was a patriot with more delightfully rainbowed colours than Narain. He is a divine diamond with flaming facets. And being the son of soil, it was from dust that he became a diamond. There is no chemical difference between coal and a costly stone, and it is the oven of patriotic fire that performs the magic of this alchemy. But it requires the cool courage of a martyr to plunge into the flaming furnace of nationalism. And Mr. Narain has that unique quality, enough and to spare. Very well he deserves the tribute that Mahatma Gandhi paid to him.

Mr. Narain has the dash of a devil in him. He is the one man who can say to the Goddess of Freedom, "I will defy even death to die for thee." Even the worst haters of this patriot will melt before the fire of his patriotism.

And out of this fire, Jai Prakash produced a golden link. It put India in its proper place in the chain of international events. India had forgotten food in its fever for freedom. Now Mr. Narain acted as a stern reminder to the leaders that liberty, if it has any sense at all, must mean more loaves for the masses. Food must be looked upon as the

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goal as well as the first line of defence in a patriotic war. Bread is the be-all and end-all of the struggling masses. Hunger drives them on. And if freedom does not bring food in its train, it brings nothing for which the peasantry are flinging away their lives. The struggle for sovereignty must also be a struggle for Socialism. Food, the main driving force, must not be divorced from Freedom.

Gandhiji is also no doubt a Socialist in a measure. But he is what is known as the "Christian Socialist." And hence he is not of much use to the masses. Christianity and capitalism have long been wedded. Therefore, Christianity and Socialism go ill together. Their marriage sounds almost ironical. And Mr. Narain's political dare-devilry has lit up this irony so that all who have eyes may see and all who have ears may hear. Economic exploitation is biting into the bones of the masses. The present economic structure is a house of tyranny for most of the people. And nothing short of a revolution can save them. The revolutionaries must strike at the roots of this unequal and uneconomic system of society.

So far as the economic problem is concerned, the Congress has only proved itself to be a debating club, and has willy-nilly played into the hands of the Capitalists. Beyond the ken of khadi-and-charkha,

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Gandhiji is not prepared to undertake or permit anything. A vigorous lead on the socialistic lines could industrialize the country even to the negation of British masters. But the Mighty Mahatma has neither mood nor mind nor might to embark upon big plans. Pompous phrases alone cannot feed the starving peasantry.

The milk-and-water Socialism of the Karachi Session was a red rag to the Red Fugitive. But even there he could not give vent to his wounded feelings. The Gandhites had their heyday of life. The whole show was theatrically funny. The Karachi Resolution was looked upon as the step of the Communistic giant. But it was only the ghost of Communism. It was for Jai Prakash to set the ghost at rest. The British Government had to close the doors of a prison behind him in order to close his mouth. He called it a "meaningless programme." And Father Time has proved how meaningless it was !

But imprisonment gave Jai Prakash food for thought. It was of course red loaf for the red leader. He was not going to swallow Gandhism, like Byron, with biscuit and soda-water. Coming out of the purgatory, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain engineered the citadel of the Congress Socialist Party. He cut himself off from every dog which hitched itself to

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Gandhism. He ceased to be the horse of the high power. He still drove the Congress High Command. But he did not drive them to destiny. He only drove them so desperation.

The fault of Jai Prakash Narain is that he cannot put up with reactionary elements in the world. He will not go back. He cannot stand still. He must move on. He cannot be a die-hard for hard-dying vested interests. He would rather die easily for the doleful and the down-trodden. He will gladly give up his breath for the poor. He will cheerfully shuffle off the mortal coil for those who are pining in the coils of the capitalistic boa-constrictor. Is this redness? If Narain is red, how red was Christ?

CHAPTER II

The Colourful Character

SHRI Jai Prakash Narain is one of the two most colourful characters in the playground of Indian politics. His soul, of course, is Subhas Chander Bose. The two death-defying patriots have added romantic dare-devilry to the otherwise dull and doleful struggle for freedom. Yet Narain and Bose differ as much as the green earth from the blue heaven.

Unlike Bose, Narain had no colourful beginnings. He did not belong to an aristocratic family. Even more than Mahatma Gandhi, out of dust came Narain. He is the son of a peasant, and has lived to devote his might, mind and money to the welfare of peasantry. Only three persons earn their living honestly in the world, said Thomas Carlyle: a Peasant, a Soldier and a Scholar. Judging by this standard, our hero has lived his life most usefully. He has been a born peasant, a soldier of freedom and a scholar of matchless brilliance.

Jai Prakash's life has been packed with varied activities. He has spent considerable part of his

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youth in America, where he alternatively worked in field and studied in the University. His broad international outlook, and training in Marxism, are the result of his stay in that country. Back home he devoted himself to the task of building up a Socialist Party in this country, and spreading the message of anti-Fascism.

His adventurous life has a keen resemblance to that of another Indian patriot, Lala Lajpat Rai, who also imbibed a good deal of his radical ideas from his stay in America, but the Punjabi leader was not a Socialist, nor the product of this epoch of anti-Fascism as Jai Prakash Narain is. In view of the story of this youngman who has along with Nehru built up an anti Axis front in India from 1933 onwards should stimulate resistance against the enemies of freedom.

In November 1942 Jai Prakash Narain disappeared from Hazaribagh Jail. This story of his mysterious dash had all the thrills of escape of a French revolutionary from Bastille before 1792 and in our own time of some German anti-Fascists from Hitler's concentration camps at Dachau. But this is only a chapter of his long Odyssey of life which contains many such adventures. Twenty years ago

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during the non-co-operation days, he left India for America under similar mysterious circumstances.

Once there, he began to do hard manual work and during intervals when he had both money and leisure he studied in the University, thus combining two lives, that of the intellectual with worker like Lawrence of Arabia, who while he was not writing his "Seven Pillars of Wisdom" or translating Homer worked hard among Arabs, and built a new civilisation for the desert people.

Jai Prakash Narain faced a similar task of building up a new civilisation in India on his return from America in 1931. He had returned from America with new hopes, and a new faith—in Marxian philosophy. But faith alone would not have helped him. Many young men had come back from abroad with their youthful heads full of ideas, and a fire burning in their eyes, but soon those ideas had become stale, or had been reduced to mere arm-chair claptrap and the fire after flaring up for a while in tropical heat had become cold. The same might have been the lot of Jai Prakash Narain. He was placed in the Labour Research Department of the Congress by Jawaharlal Nehru and he might have remained there theorising about Indian labour problems, building up statistics and living the life

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pared to join any socialist party which did not go to the extremes the Communists or the Anarchists went. It was this element among the workers and the middle classes which strengthened the socialist parties in Spain and Mexico. A similar condition existed in India. Here Social Democracy had never had any trial. Instead there was the 'Christian Socialism' of Gandhi, Communism and Conservatism. A voice for such a midway Socialism between Gandhism and Communism had been raised by Nehru at the Lahore Congress. But that voice was lost in the racial passions that were aroused against the British after the Lahore Congress, and in the struggle which ensued in 1930, the issue of Socialism was relegated to background and Nationalism was strident everywhere. In 1931, when Jai Prakash returned to India, tempers had somewhat cooled. Gandhi-Irwin Pact had been signed, the struggle against Britain was for the time being shelved and people were in a mood to debate Socialism and working-class problems.

Pandit Nehru had erstwhile vigorously supported the cause of Socialism. The Government had banked on Communalism, while Nehru had preached Communism. The Congress was earnest in embarking on a struggle for independence. And independence lit up the eyes of young patriots

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like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. His presidential address at Lahore revealed the innermost springs of his vision. The world was passing through an economic slump. The international depression shook the very foundations of capitalistic regime. Capitalism had failed on both sides of the Atlantic. There was a *dollar* depression, a *franc* failure, a *sterling* sterility, and a *mark* morbidness. The international currency was taken seriously ill. Not even the *rupee* escaped its rabidness, nor *yen* its yellow fever.

Nehru confessed his firm faith in Socialism. He could not think of a Free India without the social control of key industries. The peasants can never consider themselves free unless free plots are allotted to them. For them freedom can only mean freedom from the clutches of the landlord and the money-lender. In no other way can the sun of freedom rise on India's million villages. Even before the Lahore Congress, Pandit Nehru had expressed what Shri Narain embodied later on :—

“To-day we see a society in which there are tremendous differences between man and man—great riches on one side and great poverty on the other. Some people live in luxury without doing any work, whilst others work from morning to night with no rest or leisure

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and yet have not got the barest necessities of life. This cannot be right. It is the negation of justice. It is not the fault of individuals who happen to be rich. It is the fault of the system and it is up to us to change this system which permits of exploitation of man by man and produces so much misery.”

We should not, however, view the growth of Socialism in India merely as a diversion of the people from Nationalism and the struggle against Britain. This would not help us in understanding the turn events took in India, and the way Jai Prakash moulded the socialist movement of our country.

India is only a link in the world chain and the period between 1929-31 which elsewhere saw the death of Social Democracy and Liberalism, in India was the period of reaction against Gandhian ‘Christian Socialism.’ People in India had begun to ask themselves questions when they saw the capitalist structure tottering in Europe. When they read of ‘hunger-marches’ in London, the falling gold standard, the increase of the unemployed in Britain and America, they asked why were these things happening there? If freedom meant bread for all, why the British, the Germans and the Americans, who were free in their countries, had food queues, unemployed, and hunger-marches? Once

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again it reminded us of the famous lines of Shelley :

*In countries that are free,
Such starvation cannot be,
As in England now we see.*

Surely Swaraj is much more than what Gandhi had been telling us it is ! Freedom is not enough. There was something wrong with the economic system too. It must go.

Yet the Communists have been telling the people this much for the past eleven years. They have not followed the Communists because of the British propaganda against Russia, the Congress silence about what was happening in that vast sub-continent and the bungling of the Communists with all their anti-religious talks which had frightened away people who would have been the best recruits to their cause.

Communism did not have much fascination for the Indian mind. But it was restless for economic change and prepared to listen to anybody who put the case for Socialism to them.

Jai Prakash brought that message.

It was not only that he knew what they wanted ; not only the reaction against Gandhian 'Christian Socialism' in India and the crisis which Liberalism faced everywhere helped him. He had appeared on the Indian scene at the right time, but his past upbringing also helped him.

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Jai Prakash is the son of a farmer and was brought up in an atmosphere which breeds Socialist outlook. He has known life at first hand, as Yusuf Maheraly has put it. In America he had to work hard to make both ends meet. This poverty in early life has been the feature of life of such Social Democrat leaders as Ebert and Ramsay MacDonald, yet the socialist movement is none the richer for their contribution. These petty Social Democrat leaders stand no comparison with Jai Prakash. None of them imbibed Marx as Jai Prakash did. Their sphere of work was not of the revolutionary workers, the miners, unemployed, or workers of colonial countries who faced the rigours of life under a foreign imperialism and a native capitalism. And above all they were products of a different time, raised high in a crazy decade in which anything could happen from the exchange of billion German marks at the rate of a dollar to the Englishmen, denouncing the French occupation of Ruhr, and themselves doing nothing to help the Germans in the launching of the greatest battleships, while the hunger-marches continued—all that was peculiar of the years 1920-30. Jai Prakash entered the working-class politics when the world had done away with such leaders and although Ramsay MacDonald continued to function as Prime Minister he was shorn of much of his former

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power. The socialist-minded people and the workers had no use for opportunists. In several countries Socialism was no longer associated with Social Democracy. The gradual rise of Spanish Socialist Republic was proving that. So it would not do to compare the early life of Jaiprakash with that of Ebert or Ramsay MacDonald. It was essentially revolutionary, at first nationalist during non-co-operation days and then socialist after his return from America. In one sense it was more analogous to that of the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties in Spain, England and France. Caballero, the Spanish Socialist leader, Maurice Thorez, the French Communist Party General Secretary, and Harry Pollit, the British Communist Chief, who rose to power in the years following 1931 had all had working-class origin and it is with them that we can compare Jaiprakash's early life.

As they had to clean systematically the labour ranks of social democratic and liberal elements, Jaiprakash had to purge the Gandhian 'Christian Socialists.' This 'Christian Socialism' manifested itself at Karachi Congress. The leaders of the Congress, behind times by at least a decade, sought to satisfy the intelligentsia and the working class of India by resolutions like that on fundamental rights which was the sort of stuff the first Labour

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Government in England paraded about in its early days of office. The resolution, a part of which we give below, utterly disgusted Jaiprakash Narain and proved to be the turning point of his life.

“2 (a) The organisation of economic life must conform to the principle of justice to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living.

(b) The State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen and protection against the economic consequence of old age, sickness and unemployment.

3. Labour to be freed from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.

4. Protection of women workers and specially adequate provision for leave during maternity period.

5. Children of school-going age shall not be employed in mines and factories.

6. Peasants and workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interests.

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The system of land tenure and revenue and rent shall be reformed and an equitable adjustment made of the burden on agricultural land immediately giving relief to the small peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and in case of uneconomic holdings, exempting them from rent, so long as necessary with such relief as may be just and necessary, to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent, and to the same end, imposing a graded tax on net income from land above a reasonable minimum.

9. There shall be drastic reduction of military expenditure so as to bring it down at least one-half of the present scale.

10. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments shall be largely reduced. No servant of State other than specially employed experts and the like shall be paid above a certain fixed figure which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.

11. No duty shall be levied on salt manufacture in India.

12. The State shall protect indigenous cloth and for this purpose pursue the policy of exclusion of foreign yarn from the country and adopt such other measures as may be found necessary. The State

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shall also protect other indigenous industries when necessary against foreign competition.

13. Intoxicating drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited except for medical purposes.

14. Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest.

15. The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.

16. Relief of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury—direct and indirect.

17. The State shall provide for the military training of citizens so as to organise a means of national defence apart from the regular military forces."

Jaiprakash has subjected the above resolution to severe criticism. He compares it with the following resolution of the Congress which was passed by an All-India Congress Committee meeting held at Bombay in 1929:

"In the opinion of this Committee the cause of the ever-increasing poverty and misery of the Indian masses is apart from foreign imperialism the present economic structure of society which is being strengthened by the foreign government, so that it should continue to maintain its hold through this system.

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Therefore in order to move this poverty and misery and to change the condition of Indian masses, revolutionary changes which strike at the very roots of this unequal, social and economic system are necessary."

Commenting on it he says that the demand to change the social and economic system is underlined in the above passage and the reasons for it have been explained with a clarity and frankness which a socialist might observe: "Then why should we have any differences with the Congress?" He answers the question by saying that the reason of the differences is that the Congress becomes silent after discussions and debates over revolutionary changes and does nothing in practice. Then shifting his attack straight to the Karachi Congress resolution he asks if the taxing of inheritances and incomes, the nationalising of industries, reducing of expenditure and revenue on land were all included in the pompous phrase of revolutionary changes in economic and social system. Could these schemes uproot the destructive economic system?

"In spite of this hollowness of Karachi resolution of fundamental rights, it is being put forward as the basis of the new economic policy of the Congress," he says.

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Some people might reason, he adds, that the All-India Congress Committee is not Congress. This might serve as an excuse for some, but it was an inadequate reply to his objections. The Karachi Congress resolution, it would appear from its heading, favoured economic freedom along with political freedom. "But what is economic freedom ? Are our friends and leaders prepared to answer this question and can they honestly say that economic freedom can be achieved by such a meaningless programme of Karachi ?" he asks. If what the Congress meant by economic freedom was the nationalising of industries it was a beautiful vision of freedom which this unfortunate country might one day achieve ! India had been a slave country for such a long time that the people had forgotten the real aim of freedom.

He was not in favour of the Congress adopting the entire programme of Socialism at Karachi. He could not make any such demand on the Congress but he suggested that the Congress should put forward such an economic programme which when brought into practice should rid the masses of economic exploitation by others, and the people should have control of political and economic affairs in their own hands.

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The above criticism of the Karachi resolution was written long after that resolution was passed. At Karachi Jaiprakash Narain could not voice his disillusionment because there the Gandhies had their day. Jawaharlal Nehru who alone represented the Marxian socialist view had agreed to this milk-and-water Socialism of Karachi resolution.

The funny thing about this resolution is that a charge was brought against Nehru by certain people that M.N. Roy had drafted the resolution on economic rights and that was why it was alleged to be communistic. Thus it would be observed that there were people who imagined the resolution to be communistic. Jaiprakash Narain in his criticism lays that ghost at rest. That Jaiprakash could be so bitter about the resolution some years after it was passed shows how exasperated his feelings had been by the resolution at Karachi.

Immediately after the Karachi Congress the civil disobedience movement was started and Jaiprakash was sent to prison. He remained in prison up to 1933.

It was in prison that he was able to coolly think over the Karachi programme and the prospect of Socialism in India. Hitler and Dimitrov are not the only persons who came out of the prison only to mould the destinies of two of the greatest political

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parties of the world—the Nazi Party and the Comintern. Jaiprakash was also to organise a new political party.

The period spent in prison had proved beneficial to the cause which Jaiprakash espoused.

In those two years Fascism became triumphant in Germany and the methods resorted to in order to suppress its opponents made it extremely unpopular among the intelligent men all over the world. The Nazi methods were aped by certain political parties in India too and the result was a great reaction against Fascism among the people and a swing towards Socialism. The anti-Fascist ideas were disseminated among others by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who, whenever he was out of prison, warned his countrymen against dangers of Nazism. This paved the way for men like Jaiprakash. In India personalities count more than the ideas, and the same words which Jawaharlal uttered if expressed by Jaiprakash would not have carried as much weight with people in those days. In this sense Nehru's contribution to the Congress Socialist Party, though indirect, was as great as that of thinkers like Sidney Webb and John Strachey to the British Communist Party, and Andre Malraux to the Communist Party of France. It is difficult to isolate the rise of Congress Socialist Party from the personality of Nehru though

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he had never openly associated with it and at times even criticised it.

The other factors which helped Jaiprakash were the debacle of civil disobedience movement in 1933 and the growth of parliamentary tendency in the Congress. The effect of the surrender by Gandhi on the younger generation of men who had been influenced by the economic and political restlessness since 1929 was profound. It may be compared with the betrayal of Ramsay MacDonald in 1931. That blow shattered the unity of the Labour Party, the younger section going over to the Communists and the Socialist League and the older section trudging a dreary parliamentary path, with a little over fifty Labour Party men in a house of over six hundred. The same story was repeated here, though in this case the Congressmen with Vallabhbhai Patel to organise them did not cut such a sorry figure in the Assembly. But in spite of this successful coup of the right in Congress, the bitterness among the people as a result of Gandhi's surrender could not be removed. It was one thing to make the loyal party men dazzle with the coup. It was another to convince the intelligentsia that Gandhi's surrender was only a wise political move which only a statesman of Mahatma's ability could make. It was not difficult, therefore, for men like Jaiprakash to rally the opin-

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ion of the people against the new move of the Congress leaders.

There is little doubt about it that the Congress Rightists shared the contempt of Jaiprakash Narain for such parliamentary institutions but they had nothing else to do in order to whitewash the Gandhi surrender. In this way they played into the hands of the Socialists.

This anti-parliamentary trend among the people which Jaiprakash made use of distinguished him from the Social Democrats of the previous decade. The Socialism which he represented would have nothing to do with a parliament in which all the people were not represented, and which had not the powers to give political and economic freedom to the people. This was not the attitude of the European Social Democrats. They took every advantage of the smallest parliamentary freedom to further what they called the interests of the working class. It was only after the Social Democratic Party was shattered to pieces by Hitler that the Socialists in Germany realised the dangerous futility of a parliament which could not make sweeping socialist reforms.

In Spain the Socialists realised it, at about the same time, that Republic and the Cortes, as they were constituted in 1931, could not work, because the

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Conservatives and vested interests still dominated them. A fresh struggle and revolution were necessary. It made there in October 1934.

This realisation, which came to the Socialists in Germany and Spain after the struggle with Fascism, dawned on Indian Socialists in a different way--as a result of the struggle with British imperialism. The civil disobedience of 1930—32 had convinced Jaiprakash that the parliamentary institutions offered by Britain were a sham. The parliaments could not be given by a foreign government as a gift. They were born out of the efforts of the forces of nationalism and organised working class. What India needed was such a strength and a unity between the organised workers and the progressive nationalists. The nationalists could be progressive only if they remained with the working class, if they organised them, and organised themselves into a strong socialist party. This was what his reading of Marx told him. And this was what his own experience, as the son of working class, in the nationalist struggle of 1930—32 confirmed. The workers needed a party. The nationalists needed an idea which could sustain their faith in nationalism. Jaiprakash was both a nationalist and a working-class man. His heart went out to the working-class and to the nationalists—both without a party, without

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a leader, without any faith. He gave them all the three. The workers had a party. The nationalist, a leader and a faith. The party was called the Congress Socialist Party. The leader was Jaiprakash and faith was Socialism.

Thus Narain made a dash of political popularity from New York to Karachi as Bose did from London to Calcutta. Each of them returned from abroad with a set mind, and set about his task without the slightest waste of time. Each of them met Gandhi with high hopes; and both of them left him "depressed and disappointed." They felt a magnetic affinity towards Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But then they realized rather too soon that he was hitched to the chariot wheel of Gandhism. And so they had to bid him goodbye. Yet Narain and Bose, even between themselves, trod upon different paths, and they almost reached the cross-roads of destiny. Although both of them charioted forward the cause of Indian nationalism; Shri Jaiprakash Narain would have no other horse except communism, while Subhas Bose has shown an inclination to harness any political creature, even Fascism, to drag the processional car of the Goddess of Democracy.

At the Karachi Congress Shri Jaiprakash Narain created as good an impression as Subhas

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Chander Bose did at the Lahore Congress. "I am for the opposition," each of them said like Byron. And like Byron they let loose magnetic influences in sympathy with their ideals. While Bose patiently suffered the exaltation of his Compatriot—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—to the supreme position of Presidentship in the Rightist camp, Narain lacked the pseudo-socialist resolution in the Karachi Congress to pieces. Thereby, he acquired odium of the Gandhite group, but that invested him with the dignity of a powerful opponent.

CHAPTER III

The Gentleman Opposite

NOBLE Narain gave no respite to the Gandhi Group. Overnight he became "the gentleman opposite" in the Congress camp. Thus Brilliant Bose and Noble Narain sandwiched the Great Gandhi between themselves. He received shot and shell from the opposite directions. But the Mighty Mahatma proved too strong for the sharp-shooters. He was able to put the strangle-hold on their necks after a brief brilliant day. If Bose was left in the lurch at Lahore, Narain was cut off from the main trench of the Congress at Karachi.

When the Congress Committee met at Patna in the early winter of 1934, harvest of differences bound together a small band of brilliant young leaders. So there emerged the idea of the Congress Socialist Party. As naturally as might be expected, Jaiprakash was appointed its organizing Secretary. So Noble Narain donned the role of the party-builder.

Jai Prakash adumbrated a two-fold policy for the new party. He made two pillars upon which

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the new edifice was to stand. Political freedom was one pillar. Socialism was another. This beautiful blending of ideologies acted like acid. And the acid cut the ground under the very feet of the Congress leaders. The Gandhites were dumbfounded. Hitherto they had posed as the saviours of the working classes. But their championship was based upon sweet sentiment rather than cold reason. And it also after a while vanished into the thin air. The Congress off and on failed to strike at the roots of the economic system. Now the Socialists shook them out of their sweet sleep of sentiments. The Gandhi Group did not take kindly to the Jaiprakash *Junta*. Soon a propaganda-mongering campaign was let loose against him and his companions by the Congress leaders. The tactics used were the same which have been used for the past hundred years by the Liberals of every country against the Socialists—namely calling them Communists or “Reds” in order to bring about violent conflict between various classes. The Congress leaders immediately after the formation of the Socialist Party issued a statement in which they declared that though the forming of the party was “welcome” to them, yet they objected to class-war programme and confiscation of property which implied violence. In reply Jaiprakash said :

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“The resolution of the Congress Working Committee regarding the Congress Socialist movement shows how reactionary the present leadership of the Congress has become. The programme adopted by the Patna Socialist conference speaks not of class-war but of organising the masses on the basis of their economic interest and fighting for the removal of their immediate demands and leading them to independence and Socialism. Nowhere in the Patna Conference had the phrase confiscation of property occurred.”

He characterised the Working Committee resolution as a challenge to the Socialists and concluded: “Let us accept the challenge and put forth our utmost energy to have this reactionary resolution rescinded and our programme adopted by the Bombay Congress.”

The main weapon used by the Working Committee against the Socialists was the bogey of violence. Since non-violence was the accepted policy of the Congress they wanted to dub the Socialists as violent and have them turned out of the Congress. There is very little doubt about it that as a Marxian Socialist Jaiprakash believed in all the implications of Marxian outlook. But that did not mean that he should have sacrificed the alliance with the Congress and thus made achievement of

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political freedom, without which no Socialism was possible, difficult. So the adherence to the Congress creed was as much necessary for him as the taking of oath of allegiance to the King was for Willie Gallacher, the Communist M. P. of the England. The Indian Communists when they entered the Congress did the same, *i.e.*, confirm their faith in non-violence as the method for achieving political freedom for India. The Congress Socialists did not preach violent class conflict as the immediate programme for the working class. They only said that class conflict was inherent in the capitalist system. The resolution of the Bombay Congress Socialists Party made this clear. It said :

“ To import the topic of non-violence into this controversy is only to cloud the issue and create prejudice. We desire to make it clear that just as other Congressmen accept non-violence as a policy so do the Congress Socialists. We feel the opinion of the Working Committee is based on entire misconception of the nature of class struggle.

“ Class struggle is inherent in the capitalist order of society where a small propertied class dominates over and exploits the mass of people. Class struggle means no more and no less than expression of irreconcilable antagonism which is already there. It is only when the masses become

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politically conscious and desire to create a classless society where exploitation would find no place that the dominant class raises the bogey of class-war.”

It is because Congress leaders did not want to end that exploitation that they raised the bogey of class-war.

“They want to see the capitalists, the land-lords, the princes and the chieftains functioning side by side with the workers and the peasants,” said Jaiprakash. Apart from some key-industries all the means of production remained in private control and ownership. If the Congress leaders did want to end exploitation, “why were they calling Socialism a mere dream and the Socialists utopians who do not understand reality and who are blind followers of the old German Jew Karl Marx?” he asked. All these talks of Congressmen were proof of their madness and ignorance.

“As far as Socialists are concerned,” he wrote “not we but all Indians of socialist and communist views consider this economic system the root cause of all misery and poverty. For this reason we attach only one meaning to economic freedom and that is Socialism. Without Socialism economic freedom is a big fraud—the nationalist weapon to exploit the masses.” When the Rightists

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had grown tired of using violence as a scare-crow they resorted to another technique which has been the favourite 'weapon' of the British Labour Party in order to discredit the Communist Party—namely the old story of Communism being unsuited to British traditions. Marxism, G. D. H. Cole, the noted labour economist, tells us, has no chance of success in Britain because of the existence of the middle class which Marx thought would be absorbed in the proletariat. The same argument was put forward in India. It was said that Indian temperament tended to reconcile the class conflicts rather than accentuate them. Individualism had taken deep roots in Indian soil. India was industrially backward and only a typical Indian brand of Socialism, that is Gandhism, could hope to have any chance of success.

This delusion was ably demolished by Jaiprakash Narain in his book "Why Socialism?"² In a passage, which deals with Indian traditions and Socialism, he put forward his case with the clear-headedness of a seasoned Marxist.

The philosophy of Shri Jai Prakash Narain has been red. His methods have never been red. Mr. Narain believes no more in violence than does Mr. Gandhi. His redness is almost greenness. It approaches the redness of the Khudai Khidmatgars

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who have been wrongly called Red Shirts. Nobody is so green as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Not even Mahtama Gandhi approaches the glorious greenness of the Frontier Gandhi. But even the Frontier Gandhi is not greener than Shri Jai Prakash Narain. He has combined Gandhism with Socialism with a masterly touch. The Socialism of Mr. Narain is not Russian. It is out and out Indian.

No wonder, the Indian National Congress welcomed the Congress Socialist Party, although they strongly protested against the class-war programme. They did not believe in the confiscation of property. The confiscation of property implied violence according to the honest convictions of the Gandhi Group with its dazzling doctrine of non-violent, non-co-operation. Jaiprakash realised "how reactionary the present leadership of the Congress has become." It was wrong to characterise Socialism as a class-war. Mr. Narain wanted to organize the masses on the basis of their economic interest. They were fighting for the removal of their immediate demands. He wanted to lead them to independence, economic and political. The attitude of the Congress was a challenge to Mr. Narain. And Mr. Narain accepted the challenge. The royal car of Socialism was not to be upset by the nightmare of violence.

Nevertheless Mr. Narain, adhered to the

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Congress creed. He did not sacrifice Socialism for Congress programme. Nor did he sacrifice the the Congress programme for Socialism. He tried to drive the both forward like the two wheels of the carriage of nationalism. And that is why Mahatma Gandhi admired the spirit of Mr. Parkash even though he did not appreciate his views.

Mr. Narain said that the methods by which wealth was piled up were in vogue in India as well as in other countries. In other words capitalism and profit motive was existent in India. As for Indian traditions, did they prevent men from having the most comfortable life or benefiting from all the amenities that the brain of man could invent ? The importance attached to the individual in Indian culture meant that he should have the greatest opportunity of achieving his high aim of progress and civilisation. This culture was never based on a narrow-minded individualism of the type western capitalism sought to foster in minds of people. If the greatness of the individual was the chief lesson of our culture, then Socialism provided the greatest opportunity for achievement of that aim. " Did not Trotsky say that only in a socialist system could the middle-class men achieve the greatness of a Plato or Marx ?" he asked.

Then he dealt with the industrial backwardness of India. This he wrote could not be put forward as

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an argument against Socialism because Soviet Russia had achieved Socialism in spite of this backwardness.

This was a conclusive reply though of course the Congress leaders did not wish to follow the example of Russia. It may be remarked, however, that the vested interests and the Liberals can use the argument of industrial backwardness and industrial progress—both ways against the Socialists and Communists. Sometimes they use one, sometimes the other. In Germany the Social Democrats declared that industrialisation had made chances of success of Marxian Socialism difficult because of the rise of the highly paid class of the workers who were far removed from the proletariat. It was this class of workers whose interests the Social Democrats defended.

At the same time these Social Democratic Party men thought their brand of "Socialism" was best suited to Germany, and laughed at the idea of Socialism succeeding in Russia. There was no such thing as socialism in Russia, their leader Karl Kautsky had said. It was only Asiatic despotism.

The Indian leaders were also their followers in some ways and propped up the argument of industrial backwardness in defence of their case.

But in spite of this hard hitting the strength of the Socialists increased in the years 1934-35. Two

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factors largely contributed to it. The one was the suppression of the Communist Party in 1934. This gave the Congress Socialists an opportunity to win over the communist-minded elements and absorb them in their own party. Their defence of Marxian Socialism and their opposition to the Congress leadership made them indistinguishable from the Communists. In fact, apart from the affiliation with the International which the Indian Communists have claimed and which does not exist, the Congress Socialists have often faithfully followed the Marxist tradition, and have been sometime in the past nearer to the Comintern line than the so-called Communists themselves. So it was not difficult for the Congress Socialist Party to benefit at the expense of the Communists in those days. When the Comintern in September 1935, decided on popular front against war and Fascism, the Congress Socialist Party took up the cry in India, and pleaded with the nationalists for a united front against war and imperialism.

This new phase was a heaven-sent opportunity to the Congress Socialists. Their enemies, the Working Committee leaders, had discredited them as followers of the German Jew Karl Marx and having no regard for the traditions of their own country. Indeed the campaign of the Socialists in their early

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years had been mainly directed towards explaining what Socialism was, and emphasising the difference between Gandhism and Socialism. They would not have gained any ground if they had not stressed this.

Having thus stabilised their position, they put the Congress leaders off their track by switching on to the September 1935 line of the Comintern. They said that they wanted a national united front with the nationalists and that their loyalty to Socialism did not prevent them from alliance with all those who wanted to liberate India from the foreign yoke. This put the Congress leaders in a hole, and they could no longer accuse the Socialists of forgetting the cause of freedom and indulging in class-war propaganda. Jawaharlal Nehru's election to the Congress presidency in 1936 helped the Socialists. At Lucknow Congress there were many skirmishes between the Socialists and the Rightists. Jaiprakash and his small band of young men, who had so far not been able to have their way in the Congress sessions, now appeared in increased strength, and were able to achieve great measure of success. Some of their resolutions were passed at Lucknow, some at Faizpur, yet others were thrown out. The President threw his influence on their side on such resolutions as proportional representation, the affiliation of workers and peasants' organisation to Congress, etc. Some resolutions such as about war and Congress

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foreign policy which had been inspired by the President's address were also passed. Jawaharlal Nehru was able to carry out many of his plans because of the backing of the Socialists, and they in their turn were helped by his great personal influence. It is difficult to imagine how the one could function without the other. The Congress Rightists had been very much displeased by the campaign for Socialism carried on by Nehru. They did not understand his talk about organic link between freedom of India and that of the world, or his attacks against German, Italian and Japanese Fascism. They were isolationists in foreign affairs pulling the Congress to their own policy like the American Republican Party before the outbreak of this war. All these were big obstacles which no President without a party behind him could surmount. The man whom Nehru had five years ago placed on the Labour Research Department of the Congress, believing that he would one day go far was now the leader of a strong Socialist party, which he had organised while Nehru was in prison. Jaiprakash co-operated with the great leader who had encouraged him in the past. In him Nehru found an able general, without whose co-operation the great idealistic schemes of Nehru may have suffered the fate President Wilson's ideas of a new world order did—it might have been accepted by the Congress but it could never take any

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practical shape. Wilson suffered for lack of support among his own people, Nehru would have failed for lack of a political party behind him.

Similarly the Socialists bereft of his support would have suffered the fate that recently fell to the lot of the Republicans who set up their own candidate and ignored Wendell Willkie. They would have been isolated by the Congress Rightists and relegated to background. So Jaiprakash and Jawaharlal between themselves shared the honours for the victories to the cause of Socialism and progress achieved at Lucknow and at Faizpur.

And as if the great socialist leader wished to reward the genius of his General Jaiprakash, he appointed him along with his two comrades to the membership of the Working Committee. But Jaiprakash soon realised that he could not serve two masters at the same time—he could not be the leader of the Congress Socialist Party and at the same time member of the supreme cabinet of the nation, because he could not act always in agreement with the wishes of his colleagues in the Working Committee. The Congress Rightists had meekly submitted to the programme of Jawaharlal Nehru at Lucknow but they had demanded their share of pound of flesh from him—namely, that he should while President of Congress speak about Socialism only *as his personal view* and not as that of the Congress. Nehru who had

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first threatened to resign had later on conceded this small point and had agreed in interest of national unity to their wishes. Whenever he spoke about Socialism, he made it clear that Congress was not for Socialism, but it would one day come round to his view.

This, Jaiprakash Narain could not do. Socialism was not to him merely an article of faith—it was the creed of the party whose head he was. The party of Mr. Narain propagated Socialism, because they could not help propagating it. The Socialists were wedded to their ideas as much as the Gandhites were wedded to the Khadi programme.

Consequently, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain was like a fish out of water in the Congress Working Committee. The sand of Gandhism choked the throat of the Socialist spokesman who longed for the blue waters of the Indian Ocean. His thirst could not be quenched with a dozen drops of distilled water offered to him in the political laboratory of the Karachi Congress. He longed for the deeper and diviner golden waters where India may breed the golden fish rather than starved, famined and skeletal fry, no more alive than dead, lingering out a dead-alive existence of “cooli” blacks.

CHAPTER IV

Supreme Socialist Statesman

JAI PRAKASH Narain did not take long to become a supreme socialist and a socialistic statesman. He brought new zest and zeal into Indian politics, jumping from strength to strength, and achieving in days what Mahatma Gandhi has taken decades to accomplish. The political popularity of Bose and Narain was like that of a trailing comet. Trailing clouds of glory did they come from heaven which was their home. And not only did they demolish the house of cards set up by Gandhiji, but they put up in its place a new superstructure of simplicity, sublimity, strength and secrecy. And they attracted the youngmen like a powerful magnet. And they have created a permanent gulf between Young India and Elder India. It is a gulf which cannot be bridged over by khadi-and-charkha outlook and outfit.

The measuring of strength with the Congress Rightists at Lucknow and at Faizpur had revealed to Jaiprakash the immense popularity his party had gained both in the Congress and in the country. It

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link was no longer shouting in wilderness for Socialism as in year 1934-35. It had become a decisive factor in Indian politics. The task before Jaiprakash was how to retain that strength, consolidate it, and then, if possible, let the party expand still more. The situation in the country which helped him to form the party in 1934 was now again in his favour. He could once more swing the opinion against the Congress High Command. He had found a gap in their programme, and that was their dubious attitude towards office-acceptance. His party was out and out opposed to the new constitution and simultaneously with Faizpur Congress it was decided to hold a Socialist Conference, where resolutions against the constitution were passed. One of the resolutions called upon the country to observe a general strike on April 1, as a mark of protest against the new constitution.

It was even suggested that a powerful mass movement be launched for the ending of the unwanted constitution. All this sabre-rattling took the wind out of the sails of the Congress leaders and created restlessness among the people, which no amount of finely phrased election manifestoes could remove. The Congress leaders, once they had embarked on parliamentary activities, were open to criticism on the question of office-acceptance, etc. It was a

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strange irony that the Congress Rightists with no love for democracy found themselves being branded as democrats, and their parliamentary programme, assailed by a party, which though Marxist, yet had never favoured a dictatorship of the proletariat and which would have run a parliamentary machine without any searching of hearts if it had the right to enforce socialist programme. It was precisely because the present constitution gave no such power to the assemblies that the Socialists opposed it. But since the Rightists had decided to make use of the assemblies in order to "wreck" the constitution, the Socialists could very well go forward with the slogan of mass action.

All this showed that the leader of the Socialists was not blind to any advantage that may come to his party. He took pains to make it clear that the Socialists were not opposed to a parliamentary institution but only to the brand of democracy Britain was enforcing upon India. And he seemed quite consistent in saying so, for his party had since 1934 opposed the parliamentary programme of Congress.

While the general strike programme on April 1 was aimed at isolating the Rightists from the masses, another resolution was passed at the Faizpur Socialist Conference which brought the party in the arena of active working-class politics. The resolution was

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about the B. N. Railway workers' strike. It supported their demands and assured them of full sympathy of the party. Similar resolutions about formation of Kisan Sabhas were passed. All this showed that the Socialist leader was opening up several fronts simultaneously.

But while success had come to Jaiprakash at Lucknow and Faizpur and future prospects seemed quite bright, no amount of political astuteness on his part could prevent the division in the Socialist Party itself, for the Socialist party was not a homogeneous party like the Communist Party or Gandhi Seva Sangh. In spite of its left extremism, its Marxian outlook and the fact that it was a left reaction against Social Democracy and Liberalism, in spite of all this and its leadership of working-class origin, the Congress Socialist Party could not shed its middle-class complexion. It was not a party of the working class. It was "Pink," but not "Red," and not all "Pink." It wanted complete independence and Socialism and there could be men who believed in both without having read Marx as thoroughly as Jaiprakash and other "Pinks" inside his party had done. So all sorts of people had crept in the Congress Socialist Party—from left nationalists like Acharya Narendra Deo to anti-communists like Masani. This, however, was quite natural. It had happened in case of Soci-

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alist Parties in Spain and Mexico and it could happen in India. The Spanish Socialist Party after achieving a remarkable success in March 1936 elections broke up in several factions, Right, Centre, Left, followers of Prieto, Caballero and Negrin. The divisions led to disasters, and disasters to unity first under Caballero, then under Negrin.

Similarly in India, the Socialist Party, creation of like circumstances, suffered the same disasters as in Spain.

In spite of the unanimous opposition offered to the new constitution at the Faizpur Conference no uniform programme was adopted. While in most cases the Socialists abstained from direct participation in elections, only giving moral support to Congress candidates, at several places Socialist candidates were set up and in U. P. a Socialist, Sampurnanand, became Minister of Education. The general strike of April 1, proved to be a tepid affair, as the Congress had already decided on office-acceptance and the Socialists had willy-nilly accepted its decision. The working class thus had no enthusiasm in the general strike merely as a demonstration. Just as in France the general strike on December 1, 1938, which aimed at a demonstration against the Daladier regime proved to be a flop, for lack of revolutionary action to back lead it, the April 1 general strike in India did not have the

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support of the entire working class. As a political manoeuvre it failed to have the effect the previous anti-office propaganda of the Socialists had. Fact was that somersault of men like Sampurnanand had created utter confusion in minds of people. After the Delhi Convention, together with Jawaharlal Nehru, the Socialists had to retrace their steps.

The Gandhites had achieved sweeping success every where, both Nehru and the Socialists had helped them.

“It isn't Socialism” the Socialists might have said when the verdict of Delhi Convention was made known. To this the Rightists might have replied, “True, but it is not April 1936.”

So after the Delhi Convention, Jaiprakash had to change the programme of his party from one of negative opposition to office-acceptance to that of positive criticism of the Congress Ministries whenever interests of the working class were involved. At any other time this sort of compromise would not have mattered. One could always say that national unity demanded it and after all the Socialists had all along stressed the need of national unity. Jawaharlal Nehru had agreed to the decision of office acceptance putting forward national unity as the main plea. They could do the same. But as has been observed,

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divisions had crept into the ranks of the Socialists and one of them had become a minister. All this made things quite difficult for Jaiprakash. Another disturbing feature for the Socialists was the emergence of the Communists in the political field after remaining in oblivion for three years. The formation of Congress Ministries had encouraged the Communists to leave the dug-outs and though they could not function as a political party because the ban on them had not been lifted, they became quite prominent. In Bombay and U. P. they were able to capture several trade unions, and through them and through their sympathisers in public, they voiced their demand for lifting of the ban. The governments of several provinces even went so far as to recommend to the Central Government that the ban on the Communist Party should be lifted.

The Communists benefited from the various divisions inside the Socialist Party. Just as in 1934-35 the Socialists had their day and won over several dissident Communist elements, so in 1937 the Communists stole the thunder from the Socialists by capturing the working-class organisation and the youth and students' federation.

The Congress parliamentary programme of 1937 had created as much dismay among the youth as the surrender of Gandhi in 1933 and the subsequent

parliamentary activities did—then the Socialists absorbed the revolutionary unrest, now the Communists were the masters of the situation everywhere and Communism among the students was quite a rage. Again the situation in India in 1937 had a remarkable resemblance to that of Spain after the Franco retreat near Guadaramma. There the Communists gradually emerged as a strong party, and although the Socialists remained numerically strong, the Communists predominated in International Brigade, and due to their superb discipline and organisation made up for the deficiency in their numbers. The Indian Communist Party lacked any Passionaria or Jose Diaz, it was poor in leadership, but even so it benefited at the expense of the Socialists.

Jaiprakash, as leader of the Socialists and himself a "Pink," had no hatred for the Communists. Nor any other leader in India had. It is only recently that the tide of nationalism has turned against the Communist Party of India, because they betrayed the Indian National Congress in the "Quit India" Struggle of 1942. The Congress leaders have recently severely criticized the anti-national policy of the Communist in India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, once a firm supporter of Communism is full of fret and fury.

"Communism is good so far as it touches the

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curves of human life. But it is a paradox that while Communists in other countries are concerned with the interests of the proletariat the Communist Party of India has become a part and parcel of the upper strata of middle classes," declared Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a public meeting.

He also said while millions of people were feeling the pinch of cloth scarcity, millions of weavers in this country were sitting idle for want of yarn due to the bungling of bureaucracy and declared that this anomaly must go.

Addressing a meeting at Mohammedabad Pandit Nehru said : "It is improper for you to contribute to the victory or any other fund. Tell the officials responsible for collection that you are no more going to submit to these sorts of forcible collections."

He also asked the people to shed their fear complex and face the world bravely.

What would have been the attitude of Shri Jai Prakash Narain, if he were out of the prison bars to-day, towards the Communist Party of India ? It is difficult to say with cocksure confidence. But it is not difficult to guess that his attitude could not be different from that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In fact, Mr. Narain's censure would be even stronger than Pandit Nehru, because the Congress Socialists have taken even a greater part in the "Quit-India"

struggle than the ordinary run of Satyagraha-imbued Congressmen, so much so that the Government of India is treating them as State prisoners guilty of high treason and has not released them as yet.

But that at time the conditions were different. Shri Jaiparkash Narain was drawn more towards the Communists even than the members of the Congress. He was always in favour of left unity. He knew that apart from certain differences in outlook he was nearer to Communists than to Congress radicals, left nationalists or liberals. His Socialism was the product of an epoch in which co-operation with the Communists could not be ruled out. But there was no emergency of war as in Spain to keep the Socialists united with the Communists. There could be only fraternal left brotherhood which could bring the two parties nearer. Jaiprakash had this feeling, some Communists had it, but a great number of the Socialists and Communists have never felt such need for Socialist unity. And an anti-Communist group led by Masani had emerged in the Congress Socialist Party which had made the position of the "Pinks" untenable. Besides the aims and objects of the two parties being almost identical, the increase of the Communist influence among the working class and the youth led to a natural rivalry between the two parties.

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Towards the close of 1937, the Socialists recovered from the crisis, and the element which had favoured working of the constitution in collaboration with Congress Ministries was discredited. Jaiprakash was able to stem the rot and impress upon his comrades that the rights of the working class could be safeguarded only by the vigilance of the Socialist Party and not by hob-nobbing with the Gandhites. The Socialist Party could not become an offshoot of Gandhi Seva Sangh. It must remain on the left if it was to exist at all. The question was how much left? This was a new dilemma that it faced after the emergence of the Communists. Formerly it never worried Jaiprakash how much left his party was, because it was the only left party and though on such questions as confiscation of property and dictatorship of the proletariat Jaiprakash sometimes satisfied the Gandhites by saying that the Socialists wanted neither, he had stood by all the implications of Marxism and defence of Soviet Russia was the main feature of the Socialist policy. Now that the Communists wanted to have all the monopoly of Marxism and pro-Soviet sentiments, it was naturally asked how much left was Congress Socialist Party? The Congress Socialists were not entirely a party of the middle class. In Bihar, U. P. and Punjab, the Congress Socialist Party

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had considerable backing of the peasants and in some cases of the working class too. It could not give up faith in Marxism and sympathy for Soviet Russia, even if the "Pinks" were not at the helm. But though devotion to Marxism remained as it was formerly, in the sense that most of the Marxian doctrines about inevitability of class conflict and Socialism were accepted, the Congress Socialist Party had to admit that it did not follow Marx in its entirety and could not be pro-Soviet as much as the Communists were. In other words, its middle class complexion could not be entirely shed, or if it had been it would have merged in the Communists Party. It had to stress that though it could not accept Gandhism, it would have to adjust Marxism to Indian traditions, and though it sympathised with Russia, its loyalty was first to India. In the controversies which were carried on between the Communists and the Socialists it became clear that the Socialists were critical of the purges in Russia and of its foreign policy, though they naturally sympathised with its economic system.

This criticism of Russia was a prominent feature of the policy of the British Labour Party and all other parties of the Second International. They also differed from the Communists in application of Marxism, but it is difficult to compare Jaiprakash with

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British labour leaders or his party with British Labour Party. The difference has been stressed in the foregoing pages. Here it may only be remarked that while the British labour leaders minimised the role of the working class in a socialist revolution, Jaiparkash had faith in the combined action of the people, the workers and the peasants in achieving national revolution and then socialist revolution. This point would become clear, if we remember that the Anarchists too have their differences with the Communists, but they believe in militant working class action so they could not be bracketed with the parties of the Second International. The Indian Socialists also had a similar militancy of outlook; which though we could not call revolutionary in the Marxist sense, is yet understandable as a half-way house between Social Democracy and Communism. This militant attitude was evident in their peaceful struggle for Independence of India. The British Labour Party never opposed the imperialism of its ruling class, and gave a tacit consent to its exploitation of India.

Thus the new orientation of the Socialist policy became a source of weakness as well as strength to the Socialists, weakness in the sense that it was not revolutionary Marxism, and thus it cost them the loss of certain working-class organisations and students'

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federation's strength, because the left nationalists and anti-Gandhist elements remained under its influence. A part of the peasants in the Punjab, Bihar and U. P., who only vaguely understood Marxism but wanted freedom and ending of their economic grievances, remained solidly behind the Congress Socialist Party.

Historically speaking any such orientation of policy among the Socialists was inevitable. Not only that it was partly a middle-class organisation. In Spain the Socialists were as much the party of the working class as the Communists were, nay, even more, for while the Socialists had a strong trade union *Union General de Trabajadores* behind them, the Communists had none. In spite of this the Communists, when they appeared on the scene, became the spearhead of revolutionary action and even the workers of the *Union General de Trabajadores* and some of the Socialist rank and file looked to them for guidance. Extreme Socialism of the type Spanish Socialists and Jaiprakash represented, is born due to a reaction against Liberalism and Social Democracy and as soon as it has uprooted them there are only three alternatives before it, to become a whole-hogg Marxist and merge into the Communist Party, or make the existence of the Communist Party superfluous by itself following communist lines

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as in Mexico, or to give way to the Communist Party and let it dominate working class politics while the Socialist Party continues to represent the working-class interests by serving as a half-way house between the Anarchists and the Communists, as in Spain and between the nationalists and the Communists as in India. It never degenerates into mere Liberalism but the period of its working class leadership is over.

To attain anything like its previous strength it must look more and more to alliances with the Communists or the nationalists. The Spanish Socialists survived due to alliance with the Communists, the Indian Socialists by joining hands with left nationalists.

That a communist-socialist alliance did not come about in India was no fault of Jaiprakash. It was as much due to the indifference and incompetence of the Indian Communists as the presence of a vociferous anti-Communist section inside the Congress Socialist Party. The Communists by their negative attitude made the position of the "Pinks" like Jaiprakash Narain difficult, and the result was that Jaiprakash had to let the anti-communist element in the Congress Socialist Party have its way. This anti-communist element also happened to be to a great extent anti-Marxist, its Socialism was more

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or less like that of the British Labour Party with this difference that it was as much hostile to British imperialism as any one else in India. Jaiprakash allowed it to criticise the Communists, because the Communists were criticising the entire Socialist Party and calling it Trotskyite, etc., but he never allowed the economic programme of the Congress Socialist Party to be tampered with.

The strength of the Socialists inside the Congress and the All-India Congress Committee had remained undisturbed due to the election crisis and the emergence of the Communist Party. It was this strength which induced Jaiprakash to favour Subhas Bose as candidate for Haripura. With the end of second term of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Socialists were again in danger of being without a leader of front rank to guide them. True, Jaiprakash had earned immense popularity but he was no match for the Gandhites who had been in the political field much earlier than he and had made a place for themselves. Only Nehru and Subhas Bose could claim to have popularity equal to these rightist leaders. But Nehru's popularity was being overshadowed by that of Subhas Chandra Bose, who had burst into headlines after his prolonged banishment from the country. He was the old enemy of the Congress High Command who had crossed swords

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with them long before the Socialist Party came into being. In 1937, he represented the popular reaction against Congress leaders. Gandhites by reviving the old slogans of the Swarajists had captured the votes, but the mass opinion, always revolutionary and susceptible of slightest influence, was swung 'by Subhas Chandra Bose. The Congress Ministries had only recently assumed office. The doubts of the people were not allayed. Subhas Bose was bold enough to voice these doubts. People believed that in his hands their destiny was safe. Besides they valued his past sacrifices. The Socialists who were themselves for constructive criticism of the Congress Ministries welcomed the move of Bose and helped him to get elected. Jawaharlal Nehru's influence on the Indian socialist movement was too deep to be effaced by his ceasing to be the President of the Congress. He still remained a source of inspiration to Socialists and a protagonist of their cause but his nostalgia for foreign affairs was there and as the Congress Ministries settled down to work, Nehru thought of how best to help the cause of Socialism in Spain and China. Of Indian Socialists Jaiprakash because of his foreign training was very sensitive to happenings in foreign countries, and on his initiative the Socialists did act for Spain and China. But to Nehru internationalism meant much more.

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Besides being an independent individual without normal association with any political group, he had greater leisure and energy to think on these matters. He turned to them with much zeal and enthusiasm when the pressure of home affairs was not there. Such was the state in 1937-38. The struggle with Britain had ended and though the work of the Congress Ministries needed a vigilant eye, it was nevertheless a breathing space for Congress.

Mr. Jaiprakash brought together the forces of the left, as Mahatma Gandhi has often collected the forces of the right under his holy wings. Mr. Narain, of course, was not the mother-hen of the forward forces, as Mahatma Gandhi has always been the mother-hen of faithful followers. Mr. Narain had no brood. In fact, he himself was one of the brood. But ever since then such was the zest of his zeal that he was able to collect leftish brothers and sisters round the camp fire of flaming nationalism, just as a small child with an abnormal sense of responsibility behaves paternally towards his kith and kin. With a mighty effort he was able to save the infant organization from the claws of the stronger and stouter elder hawks of Indian politics.

Hob-nobbing is of no use where there is a call for action. A shilly-shally attitude is the enemy of

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the young forces. And Mr. Narain, thank God, has never been guilty of a shilly-shally indetermined mind and body. He has always swooped to his work like a hawk. And that has been the paramount source of his success. Having stood for an all-out Socialist programme, he made no secret of his innermost heart and was ever ready to give the lukewarm nationalists a bit of his mind. His was not a party of the middle-class dictatorship. If he believed in the masses, he wanted the masses alone to dictate the programme of the Congress Socialist Party. And since the interest of the masses came into conflict with those of the middle classes, he was not afraid of taking sides. Once he decided to be red, he did not worry how red he was, so long as he was not green.

The vision of Shri Jaiprakash was not confined to the Indian horizon. He chewed the international politics with the appetite of a political glutton.

The vigilant eye was kept by the socialists whose gaze was as much fixed on Wardha as on Barcelona, Madrid and Chunking. Subhas Bose also wanted the Ministries to function well. Hence the working alliance between him and the Socialists.

It would be a mistake to characterise the socialist attitude as only backing up of the winning horse. As in the case of Nehru, both sides benefitted

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from this alliance. Moreover it was a natural climax of the new trend in the socialist policy. That trend was towards left nationalists as opposed to the Communists. So far the left nationalists had been mainly absorbed by the Congress Socialist Party; with the coming of Subhas Chandra Bose, the left nationalists had gathered round his banner and though not organised in a bloc, followed him.

Jaiprakash and his party had certain differences with Subhas Bose. Shriyut Bose had criticised the Socialists in his book, "The Indian Struggle." But though he did not subscribe to all their socialist doctrines, he was generally in agreement with them. His views about Fascism and Nazism did not matter much then, because he had not organised "Samavadya Sangh" in India, but only decided on converting the Congress to his view with the help of his followers and as far as they could go, the Socialists.

He had no idea at that time of establishing any alternate leadership in the Congress. So giving help to him was perfectly consistent with the socialist programme of a united national front.

Thus, so far as the Socialists were concerned, Haripura session was as much a success as Lucknow and Faizpur sessions were. After Haripura

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session the party was once more eminent in Indian politics.

As Jaiprakash proved himself to be extremely efficient in matters of political alliances so was he swift in acting on behalf of the working class whenever the Congress Ministries trampled over their rights. And not only that. He was able to get legislation beneficial to the tenants enacted in Bihar and U. P. The reforms proposed by Congress Ministries were not far-reaching but they were much more than a Labour Government in England or a Social Democratic Ministry in Germany could ever dream of enacting.

The Socialists were out of the Government, but they supported it much as the French Communists did the Blum regime after the 1936 elections, acting whenever working-class interests required, but preventing strikes and major industrial upheavals likely to disrupt the government. The French Communists had always in view the greater enemy, Fascism. The Indian Socialists wanted to keep the struggle for Independence always in view.

How far this policy of caution in regard to strikes was right, it is difficult to say as the Socialists were sometimes not represented in the unions which decided on these strikes. These were either under the influences of the Communists or of the

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opportunists. But as the Communists too exercised considerable restraint in matters of agitation against the Congress Governments, the Socialists' stand is understandable from the viewpoint of national unity. It was in any case not a passive alliance with Gandhism and a policy of sympathetic attitude towards the ministries, while steam-roller of vested interests moved forward to crush the workers. As against such vested interests, the Socialists cast their weight with the working class.

CHAPTER V

The Tripuri Trio

THE brilliant trio met at Tripuri. These were the "Traitors Three" of the British imperialism—the Gandhites, the Bose-ites and the Narain-ites. As the dying year, nineteen hundred and thirty-eight was rung out of the calendars, the Three Traitors came shoulder to shoulder, dangling their swords of supremacy in the Congress camp. There were the nationalists, the left nationalists and the socialists. The Right Nationalists were led by Sardar Patel, "Gandhi's Greatest General," and the Left Nationalists followed Brilliant Bose, the uncompromising patriot. And if we could regard Communists—who have gone very much right now—as the Left Socialist, the party headed by Jaiprakash formed the counter-balance as rights Socialists. Subhas Bose had stepped into the presidentship with the idea of gradually translating into action the political philosophy outlined by him in his *Meim Kampf* "The Indian Struggle." He was not there to defend the vested interests as the Gandhites did, nor to further the cause of any particular party as Jaiprakash and his socialist friends were; he wanted to organise a new party and to remodel the Congress with the help of his

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left nationalists, Socialists, Gandhists or anybody who would come under his banner. For a year he had had the co-operation of all the political parties. He had been offered co-operation by the Rightists and and he had on his part helped them to rule with a strong hand over Congress Ministries by publicly associating himself with the "excommunication" of Dr. Khare. Yet to what end? He had at last to put to them bluntly what he wanted, reorganisation of the Congress by a militant nationalist party with himself at its head—and the result of it was that first the Gandhists and then the Socialists recoiled from him.

The revolt of the Gandhists crystallised itself in their action of propping up a rival candidate against him, when he showed an inclination to stand for re-election to Congress presidentship. This put all the fat in the fire. Subhas Bose, who was confident of his popularity in the country and knew a thing or two about human psychology as well as the Gandhist leaders did, accepted the challenge and entered the battle with old slogans—namely that the British wanted to impose federation and the Gandhists, rotten parliamentarians as they were, had made a back-door deal with Britain.

This slogan, whatever the drawing-room Congress debaters and the Gandhists, might think of it, did the trick, and like "your bank savings in

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danger " cry which won the Conservatives the election against Labour in 1931, it was the cause of ruin of the Gandhists. Once racial passions were swayed, not even throwing in the name and weight of Gandhi could turn the scales against Bose. The Socialists not wishing to be surpassed by anybody in their opposition of federation voted for Bose.

But as soon as the heat of election was over, it was clear to see what precisely the victory of Bose meant to all parties. To the left nationalists it was a victory over Gandhism and a clear pat on the back to go ahead with their programme. For the Gandhists it was a serious defeat which should be avenged. To the Socialists it meant an uncertain future and a new phase in the Congress politics in which they did not know how things would turn out and what they would be called upon to do. They were in the unique position of having backed up a man over whose future policy they had no control. It was like early 1933 in Germany when Hitler had won the elections. The Catholic Centre Party and the Nationalists had voted for Hitler not wishing to vote against him, and without knowing whither he might lead the country.

But unlike Hitler's victory which brought a successful revolution in Germany, Subhas Bose's re-election did not end in a triumph for his party. He

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had swayed the popular will but he could not sway the groups inside the Congress. His own party was not an organised one like that of the Gandhists or Jaiprakash. He had never tried to organise it. Besides the peaceful atmosphere of 1937-38, when Congress Ministries were at work, was no time for aggressively nationalist slogans. These slogans had their value only in case of struggle with Britain or when there was crisis inside the Congress as on the re-election of Subhas Bose. It was only then that such extreme nationalist groups could be organised. Thus Subhas Bose had to rely mainly on Jaiprakash and his socialist friends for organised support to him, or on the faithful contingent of Bengal delegates, which always voted for him.

His position was similar to that of the leaders of the Labour Party in England who have in order to function on top not to rely on the following inside their party but on the Trade Union Congress bloc vote. The Trade Union Congress is influenced by its own outlook and its leadership.

This, however, is not to say that Subhas Bose held the views which the British Labour leaders did or that the Socialists and their leader Jaiprakash in any way resembled Sir Walter Citrine, the British Trade Union Congress chief in his political outlook. It was because both Bose and Jaiprakash were radicals and held advanced

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views on social and political matters that a co-operation between them had been possible in the past. Now, however, a different question had arisen. It did not deal with social matters, but with leadership inside the Congress. Subhas Bose believed that the old leadership in Congress had had its day and it must be replaced by a new and vigorous group. The Gandhists had as a protest against certain remarks of his resigned from the Working Committee leaving Subhas Bose to hold the baby as best as he could. Jaiprakash called a meeting of his party a few days before the Tripuri Session where the situation created by the resignations was considered. It was important for the Socialists to make it clear on which side of the barricade they stood. Since the Gandhists were non-co-operating, would not the brunt of responsibility for running the Congress fall on their shoulders if Subhas Bose decided to have a predominantly left Working Committee? Neither Jaiprakash Narain nor Acharya Narendra Deo had any desire to become Working Committee members for sake of membership only. They had been called by Pandit Nehru to serve on his Committee but had resigned after sometime. They had found it difficult to serve two masters at the same time. They could not be true to their party and true to the wishes of the President and other members of the Working Committee at the same time.

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Now the difficulties were manifold. They had to be loyal to their party now as in the past. Differences could arise with Subhas Bose as they could with Jawaharlal Nehru over the policy of the Socialist Party or of the President. The other members of the Working Committee would be no doubt leftists, but not all belonging to the Congress Socialist Party. And then it was possible that the Gandhists enraged by the personnel of the new Working Committee might leave the Congress altogether, and thus break up the joint national front against British imperialism. This would mean disruption of the Congress and the responsibility for it would be laid on the doors of the Socialists as the strongest single party. The Socialists had a responsibility towards the Congress as well as their own party. On the other hand if they joined the Congress high command, it would not only mean resignation of the President, but also a betrayal of the cause of Socialism, for these men had in the past done everything in their power to stifle the voice of the Socialist Party. Thus polarised between two extremes the Socialists decided to join neither side but to wait and let events take their natural course.

The events took a dramatic turn at Tripuri where a resolution was moved by Pt. Pant asking the President not to form the Working Committee without consulting Gandhiji. The Socialists remain-

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ed neutral and Jaiprakash in an impassioned speech appealed to both sides to think and act coolly and keep in view the greater problem—liberation of the country. He said that the Socialists could not cast their weight with either side as they disapproved of the spirit of internal warfare and did not want to be responsible for breakdown in the Congress. This stand of the Socialists was very much disapproved by several Bengal party members and some members of the Punjab Socialist Party and many Socialists from Bengal voted against the resolution. The party had many men in its ranks who could not get rid of their extreme nationalist sentiments and in any question of Gandhi *versus* Bose naturally threw their weight on the side of the latter. The Bengal contingent of the Socialists was very much critical of the policy of Jaiprakash. The Communists voted with Bose although they declared that they did not want an alternative leadership in the Congress.

Looking back after three years it is difficult to imagine what else Jaiprakash hedged in on two sides could do. He could not persuade the two sides to abandon useless friction and he could not back one side and break the Congress into two. The dilemma with confronted Jaiprakash after the resignations of Working Committee members was still there.

It was not simply a question of left and right

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as the Bengal delegates in all innocence imagined. It was a question of political sanity *versus* the spirit of revenge which pervaded the entire resolution of the Gandhists. It was a clever trap which those astute elderly statesmen had laid for the leftists at Tripuri—a provocation to act and defeat the resolution so that the Gandhists could walk out of Congress and then pose before the people as patriots and peace-makers blaming Subhas Bose and the leftists for refusing to accept their overtures for peace. Is it any wonder that Jaiprakash refused to be led up the garden by the Rightists, and did not take a false step which should have made him responsible for the red ruin which stared the Congress in its face at that time? His neutrality was if anything a silent condemnation of the action of the Rightists. He had his own doubts about Subhas Bose but that did not actuate him to any action against him. He was not thinking of his differences with Subhas Bose at the time of neutrality at Tripuri. What occupied him was the sinister move of the Gandhists, and the best way to deal with it was to ignore it. The country condemned the Pant resolution because it drove Bose into a tight hole. Instead of the blame being laid on the doors of the Leftists for break-up in the Congress, the Gandhists were thought to be saboteurs of Congress unity. Jaiprakash's neutrality made a

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martyr of Subhas Bose. A few days after the Tripuri Session, Subhas Bose, persecuted by the Gandhists, sought to unite all the leftist elements in the Congress to face this danger of extermination, a danger common to all. Left Consolidation Committee was formed consisting of Socialists, left nationalists of Bose, Communists and Roy group. The Gandhists carried the war to Calcutta and there forced Subhas Bose to resign.

The Left Consolidation Committee which at the outset carried on a united front against the Gandhists, later on broke down due to fissures in its own ranks. The one cause of friction was that renegade Roy who in his political acrobatics resembled Kautsky, Kerensky and Trotsky ; all the three rolled into one and multiplied by ten—that was Roy. He made so many right-about turns that he became completely giddy himself and made others so. Another trouble was that the Communists would always take the opposite line to that of the Socialists. And as for Bose there was no limit to the extent of opposition which he was to offer to the Rightists. His followers wanted to go to any limits in protesting against the Rightists' persecution. The Communists were with them. But Jaiprakash was not prepared to let his party suffer extermination at the hands of the Gandhists. He did not want to play into their hands

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by indulging in demonstrations of a particularly violent character.

These demonstrations had their upshot. Subhas Bose was blitzed out of Congress, and many members of his party came under the axe of discipline of the Gandhists. Due to all these events the Left Consolidation Committee broke down.

Communists might have been regarded as Left Socialists if only they had kept steady and not allowed themselves to drift away into the embraces of British imperialism. Having swung from extreme left to extreme right, they have allowed themselves to founder between the rocks of Imperialism and the whirlpool of Nationalism, the British devil and the Indian deep. If at Tripuri the Communists were not much in the picture, now they are entirely out of it.

But Subhas Chandra Bose was not concerned with Communism or Congressism. His principal motive was to cement together the leftist elements in a decisive fight against imperialism. And to this fight he devoted his mind, might and money. He was not going to shelter "Haves" against "Have-nots," as Gandhi has long been doing. But even then the struggle of Bose was not directly against Capitalism. On the other hand, he was prepared to hitch Capitalism to nationalism.

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Another disquieting feature was the question of foreign policy, which with the approach of the crisis in European affairs, became a bone of contention between Subhas Bose and the Socialists. It was Jawaharlal Nehru who set the ball rolling by declaring that one reason why he did not like the Forward Bloc was that he was not sure if in case of outbreak of war its foreign policy may not run counter to that of the Congress. He thought while the Congress condemned the Axis countries, the Forward Bloc in case of war would naturally look sympathetically towards these countries because of its resemblance to the parties in power there.

This was the signal for searching of old pronouncements of Subhas Bose, followed by a searching of hearts among the Socialists as well as the Forward Bloc.

While the Socialists gave unstinted support to foreign policy of Nehru, Bose held that India need not poke its nose in internal affairs of Europe, and though he had quite often condemned Hitlerism (since his return from Europe), he wanted India to base its policy not on hatred of a particular "ism" but according to the amount of sympathy its cause of national freedom evoked in foreign countries.

• This care-free attitude of the Forward Bloc towards foreign affairs governed the attitude of Bengal contingent of delegates at Tripuri. While

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Jaiprakash fully conscious of the gravity of international situation and the part India was to play in the shape of things to come acted cautiously and wanted India to present a united front against Fascism, the Bengal delegates behaved exactly like schoolboys in holiday mood without the slightest consciousness of the shadows looming large on the horizon.

Again since the Tripuri session, it was the absence of this seriousness towards foreign events which coloured the attitude of the followers of Subhas Bose, if not of Bose himself. A similar lack of interest in foreign affairs was to be found in the more quarrelsome and boisterous section of the Gandhists who were no less responsible for prolonging an unseemly dispute.

With the end of summer 1939 it became clear that only war, itself a barricade between man and his march of progress towards future, could break down the barricades flung at Tripuri between various political parties of India. And the war came promptly in September.

CHAPTER VI

The War And The Warrior

WHEN the World War Number Two broke out, the Indian patriots did not rest their foreheads on their muskets. They began to spoil for a fight with British imperialism. It was a golden opportunity and they did not want to forget the golden example of Irish heroes.

“What are the British war aims?” shouted Shri Jai Prakash Narain along with other Congressmen. Getting no reply, he began to feel for his “gun.” So did the other Congressmen and women. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru advised the “soldiers” to keep their powder dry and the knapsacks on their backs. India was heading for the Quit-India Movement.

Political differences among various Indian parties did not vanish overnight after the outbreak of war. Only pre-war squabbles and the struggle for leadership inside the Congress seemed to pale into insignificance before the greater conflict in the world. Instead of the question, who was to be the leader in the Congress, it was now asked who was to be the leader of the nations of the world—the *Herrenvolk* or the demoplutocracies of the

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West? So far as India was concerned, she was interested in her own freedom and her sympathies for the one side or the other were governed by its attitude towards India's freedom. The *Herrenvolk* could not be trusted in their professions of freeing the world. Congress had from the outset declared that it was opposed to Fascism and Nazism. As for the British, they were announcing with the blare of trumpets that they were fighting for democracy and right of self-determination for all nations. The Congress wanted to put these declarations to test. In September 1939 in a meeting at Wardha it was decided to ask the British to apply the right of self-determination to India. India had full sympathy with Poland, the resolution read, but it could throw its weight on the side of democracies only if the British set it free.

The resolution which was drafted by Nehru had the stamp of his views on foreign affairs. Subhas Chandra Bose, Jaiprakash and one or two other Socialist comrades of his were present at the Working Committee meeting by special invitation.

Subhas Bose left the meeting before it had concluded its sitting, because he was unable to agree with the Congress leaders. Jaiprakash had all along advocated a foreign policy identical to that of Nehru. It was, therefore, possible for him to keep up the bridge with Nehru against the isolationists. But as.

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time rolled on, and the Working Committee's resolutions were given cold reception by the Whitehall as previously the League of Nations' pronouncements were by 10, Downing Street, the Congress became more and more impatient and the Socialists intensified their propaganda about the war being a clash of rival imperialisms. Just as the British Communists wanted a people's government in England to replace Chamberlain, so in India the Socialists wanted a National Government. Subhas Bose and the Indian Communists were treading the same ground as Jaiprakash and his comrades. Bose's aggressive nationalism saw in war an opportunity for India to achieve freedom, and his criticisms of Britain landed him and his comrades in trouble. The Communists had long before the Working Committee resolution declared the war to be an imperialist one and had incurred the displeasure of the British Government. In case of the Socialists the disillusionment came gradually, but the Government had begun its drive against them simultaneously with the Communists and Subhas Bose. Unlike the British Communists, Jaiprakash did not favour Russo-German Pact. It came as a rude shock to him just as it did to many "Pinks" in England like John Strachey and Victor Gollancz, and several others who applied Marxism in a doctrinaire and inflexible way and not as a dynamic creed that it was.

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These wheels within wheels in the Indian left politics cannot be understood, if we forget that all the three parties were before the war running neck to neck for left leadership. The year 1936 which saw the climax of power of Subhas Bose and Jaiprakash was also the peak year of the Indian Communists. So far as working class leadership was concerned, as we have observed in the previous chapters, they could pose as its leaders and dismiss the Socialists, contemptuously as henchmen of Gandhi. This charge was gall and wormwood to men like Jaiprakash. War gave him the best opportunity for capturing the working class and peasant organisations from the Communists. Unlike the British Labour Party which lost to the Communists after the outbreak of war in several trade unions, like the A.E.U. Miners' Federation, shop stewards, etc., because the Communists posed as Leninists by reviving anti-war slogans of 1914, the Indian Socialists were not stampeded into submission in any of the working class or peasant organisations they held power. They posed as much Leninists and anti-imperialists as the communists and made up for a good deal of loss of prestige in working class due to what was popularly understood as alliance first with Bose and then with Gandhists in 1937—39. Now nobody could accuse them of being henchmen of Gandhi, as people did before and after the Tripuri session.

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Since the Tripuri session, it was only the thin chord of international tension which bound the Socialists to the Gandhists. Once that chord was cut and war had burst on a peaceful world, the differences between the two became inevitable. It was never any ideological affinity towards Gandhism that the Socialists felt. It was only a unity with all Congressmen, in face of common danger.

Gandhism had so far by its righteous indignation against the bureaucracy kept the Indians spell-bound. But this spell could no longer last after the outbreak of war. A new reality confronted mankind, a new force had come in—it was war, an abnormal state of society. The abnormal state of man, that is lunacy, is sickening to watch. Yet, it is revealing too, for when the lunatic person talks, one can discern in his jargon a good deal of his self which had been unknown when he was sane. We know not only what he is, but what he was. Similarly in case of Gandhism, when it was faced with the crisis of war, it babbled an obsolete lingo, and lay itself threadbare, so that it became clear that unless it rapidly adjusted itself to the changing environment, there could be no united front between the Gandhists and Socialists.

Jaiprakash strongly criticised the Congress leaders. The climax was reached when it was decided that on the Independence Day, January 26, 1940,

in addition to the old pledge the new fad of Gandhi should also be accepted as an article of faith by the people. Jaiprakash did not like the new pledge. Whereupon Gandhi in the columns of the *Harijan* in a language half-threatening, half-appealing—the sort of stuff Pope Pius XI might address to Mussolini about some Lateran dispute or Archbishop of Canterbury to Edward VIII about Mrs. Wallis Simpson—remonstrated with Jaiprakash. He wrote :—

“ Shri Jaiparkash and Shri Sampurnanand have spoken in no uncertain terms against the addendum to the pledge to be taken on the 26th instant. I have great regard for them. They are able and brave and have suffered for the country. I should count it a privilege to have them as companions in arms. I should love to win them over to my view-point. If the battle is to come and I am to lead it, I should not be able to do so with half-convinced or doubting lieutenants. ”

Dealing with the statement of Jaiprakash, Gandhi wrote :

“ Shri Jaiprakash has done well to clear his mind and the Socialist Party's position. He says of the constructive programme. We have never accepted it as the only or even as an adequately

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effective weapon in our struggle Our views regarding these matters have remained unchanged. Rather they have been strengthened by the helplessness of the national leadership in the present crisis.

“ If the majority of Congressmen entertain the view that Shri Jaiprakash propounds on behalf of the Socialist Party, I can never hope to lead such an army to success.

“ He has no faith either in the programme or in the present leadership. I suggest to him that he has quite unconsciously discredited the programme he would carry out merely ‘ because the nation’s high command desire it’. Imagine an army marching to battle without faith in the weapons to be used and in the leaders who have prescribed them. Such an army can only bring disaster to itself, its leaders and the cause.

“ If I were in Shri Jaiprakash’s place, and if I felt able to tender discipline I would advise my party to remain indoors and silent. If I had my way I would invite every student to remain in his school or college unless he got leave or the principal decided to close the college or school in order to take part in the celebration. I should give similar advice to the workmen. Shri Jaiprakash complains that the Working Committee has given no details about the work to be done on Independence Day. I thought

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that, with the programme of fraternising and khadi, there was no need for detailed instructions. I should expect Congress committees everywhere to arrange spinning demonstrations, khadi-hawking and the like. I observe that some committees are doing so. I had expected committees to make preparations from the day the Working Committee resolution was published. I shall measure the strength of the nation's response not merely by the khadi sales throughout the country."

The advice to Jaiprakash Narain to remain silent is a typical example of Gandhi's anarchism. It differs from Western anarchism in that it is not militant but there is no doubt about it that it is disruptive for society and the antithesis of Socialism to which Jaiprakash has dedicated all his life. It should be remembered that after Subhas Bose's election Gandhi indulged in a similar attempt at disrupting Congress by saying that it was his defeat and that the Rightists should come out of the Congress. We have noticed how Jaiprakash tided over the crisis then. Now once more he displayed his political acumen and refused to walk into the trap of Gandhi. He let the Independence Day resolution be read as the Congress leaders wanted though the Socialists everywhere made it clear that they differed from the programme preached in the resolution.

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Jaiprakash Narain was arrested sometime before the Ramgarh Congress. His arrest was a great blow to the anti-Fascist front in the country. The emotional Gandhi had been so much impressed by the attitude of the Socialists towards him that on his arrest he made the following statement in the *Harijan* :

“ The arrest of Shri Jaiprakash is unfortunate. He is no ordinary worker, He is an authority on Socialism. It may be said that what he does not know of Western Socialism nobody else in India does. He is a born fighter. He has forsaken all for the sake of the deliverance of his country. His industry is tireless. His capacity for suffering is not to be excelled. I do not know what speech has brought him within the law. But if 124-A or the highly artificial sections of the Defence of India Act are to be unspanned for catching inconvenient persons then any person whom the authorities want can be easily brought within the law. I have said before now that it is open to the Government to precipitate a crisis if they wish to. They have every right to do so. But I have hugged the hope that the fight will be allowed to develop along its natural course so long as it keeps strictly non-violent. Let there be no camouflage. If Shri Jaiprakash Narain is guilty of violence, violence should be proved. What the arrest has done is to

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make the people believe that the British Government want to force the issue. History will then have repeated itself. During the first civil disobedience the Government had forced the issue by arresting Ali Brothers. Is this arrest a pre-arranged plan or is it blunder committed by some over-zealous officer? If latter, it should be set right."

A few days before the Ramgarh session was to take place Jaiprakash sent the following resolution to be adopted by the Congress. Gandhi published it in his paper and commented favourably upon it.

" Out of the catastrophe of the European war, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings.

" The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether

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they be great powers or small nations and shall covet no foreign territory. The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of the order shall be the sanctions and concurrence of the people.

“The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly. The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation.

“Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social states or the State.

“The political and economic organisation of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom, which this organisation shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society. Material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production

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carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalising heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralised

“The life of the village shall be recognised and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

“The State shall protect the interests of the classes but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

“In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives, of the Government.

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"In the Indian states, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens there shall not be any titular heads of the state in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.

"This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation."

Thus it is clear that Shri Jai Prakash Narain was thinking of India as part of the world and not apart from it. He was building for a New World and New People. "Co-operative Goodwill" was his dream on which he put up towering castles of idealism. Therefore, he requested the Indian National Congress "to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stood." He did not want these divine dictates of international brotherhood to be clouded over by the dust and din of victory or defeat. A clear head means clear action. And clarity has all along been the guiding principle of Noble Narain's outlook on politics and patriotism. He wanted India to be free so that India could act and react as a free nation among free nations.

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and help in accomplishing an era of golden peace. Notwithstanding his socialism and "red" outlook, he was thinking in terms of the "total rejection of armaments." Thus it is clear that his socialism was Indianized and spiritualized.

From the socialist point of view it may be said that this was not a whole-hog socialist programme. But this was what could be put forward before the Congress without breaking the united national front.

But even this mildly socialist resolution was not put before the Congress. Shrewd politicians of the right put it on the shelf while Gandhi apart from some comments in the *Harijan* supporting certain items of the resolution, did nothing.

No wonder then that the disillusionment of Jaiprakash grew.

He was in prison when Gandhi at long last started his pin-pricking movement of civil disobedience. He did not like it and this can be judged from his letters published by the Government when he was at Deoli. They have been written long after civil disobedience was started but they are extremely revealing of his mental state.

In one passage Jaiprakash suggests to his wife the need of sending volunteers to Russia from India. but later on finds that the Congress Socialist could

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not send men and material to Russia. So he adds that while the Indian Socialists sympathised with Russia, they were powerless to do anything to help it.

This expression of sympathy towards Russia in spite of the exasperated feelings between the Socialists and Communists in Deoli Camp shows the independent character of the Socialist Party and a loyalty towards Socialism on the part of its leader. This sort of integrity in judgment cannot be expected from any of the parties of Second International in case of their conflict with the Communists at home. Nor is this attitude nearer to that of the Fourth International, for the Trotskyists as is clear from their organ in Britain *The Socialist Appeal* are critical of Stalinist regime. The Indian Socialist Party was thus in a unique position. It was following the policies of neither of those Socialist Internationals. British attitude towards India prevented it from lining up with the Socialist comrades abroad and forced it to plough a lonely furrow in the left politics of the world.

Some of the doubts expressed by Jaiprakash about Anglo-Soviet collaboration have become true. The Russians feel that they have been let down by the British on the second front. Lately, however, the opening of a front in North-West

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Africa has met with some approval in Moscow. But still the Allies have to go a long way on. Russia depends more and more on her resources, as Jaiprakash put it, to clear the Germans from the Russian soil.

A word may be said about the attitude of Jaiprakash towards the Communists at Deoli. A good deal of cause of failure to bring about left unity were the Communists themselves. The Communists adopted bad tactics such as bringing over individual Socialists into their party before their leaders had arrived in Deoli, starting hunger-strikes along with the Socialists, then giving them up right in the middle of the fight and concluding separate "peace" with the jail authorities, etc. If the Indian Communist leaders had taken the trouble to study deeply the history of the socialist movement in Spain, Austria and Germany they would have avoided the mistake of disrupting the Socialist Party by stealing individual Socialist members, when there was every chance of getting a common programme agreed for two parties. It was perfectly silly to start negotiation with rank and file of Socialists before Jaiprakash arrived in the camp. It was in bad taste and un-Marxist to brand anybody who did not agree with you as Trotskyist Trotskyist policy as we have said was not the same as that of Jaiprakash.

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As things were, the Socialists could not restrain the left nationalist element in the party from having its way. Once again position of "Pinks" like Jaiprakash was made untenable inside the party and lack of common programme with the Communists forced Jaiprakash to look to other parties for political alliance.

It was not the Comintern which benefitted from this break-up in Indian left. That body has an extremely able band of its supporters in every other part of the world which did succeed in coming to some working alliance with the Labour and Socialist Parties. It was only in India that its supporters (we dare not say representatives, for it has never been established till to-day that Indians Communists are represented in the Comintern) bungled. Afterwards the Government transferred the Socialists and Communists to their respective provinces.

A word is necessary about the "Jai Prakash documents" seized by the Government of India. Now it has been proved that these "letters" were never written by Mr. Narain. Even at time the informed people doubted their authenticity. The following question from the *Hindustan Times* dated 24th October 1941 is interesting :—

From inquiries in Wardha in connection with Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's alleged letters, it would

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appear that the statement contained in the *communique* issued by the Government of India, namely that "the plans were seized from Mr. Jai Prakash Narain when he attempted to pass them to his wife at an interview," is extremely misleading. It is alleged that the plans are believed to have been recovered from Mr. Jai Prakash's pocket by persons who evidently acted from previous information and not while he was in the act of passing them to his wife as the *communique* makes out. Government's motive in publishing the documents continues to cause mystification in Congress circles here, more particularly since the papers were seized nearly 3 months ago. Their publication cannot and does not discredit the Congress since Mr. Jai Prakash Narain had never really made a secret of his views. On the other hand Government's unconcealed satisfaction at the slightest manifestation of a sense of frustration among ardent spirits in the Congress camp will only be regarded by the general public as one more sign of the callousness of British policy in India. One may also be entitled to ask why publication was delayed so long.

If the interval was to be utilized for the purpose of taking precautionary measures to meet the new situation, the obvious reflection is that even on a sinister reading of the seized documents, they reveal

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no concrete plan of action. On the contrary, they merely represent the rambling ideas of one who is thinking aloud. Perhaps the Secretary of State, embittered by the severe handling that his pronouncements have received in this country, felt the publication of the documents would help him in his campaign to educate Americans about India. But Americans may quite conceivably refuse to despise India and Mr. Jai Prakash Narain for the views he holds and would almost certainly regard the documents as indicating the seething discontent in India.

Or was this strange publication arranged to synchronize with political talks at Wardha? Possibly it was. But one can think of better and more effective methods of breaking the news to the Congress leaders. As it is, the wide publicity given to the documents has succeeded in little else than creating suspicion and resentment.

CHAPTER VII

The Red Robin.

The Red Robinbreast escaped from the prison but he could not remain at liberty for long. The British imperialists put him again in the worst of cages—the Lahore Fort. But the Red Robinbreast was not ensnared before he had lit every patriotic breast with “Quit-India” fire. He was caught only when the flames had died down.

Then it is doubtful whether he was really caught. It is more probable that he was “sold”. A price was put upon his head. And somebody did get the blood money. He was caught in the Punjab. And so that seller must be a Punjabi. And if it is true, it will be a permanent blemish on the Land of Five Rivers. A question was put in the Punjab Assembly on November 3, 1943, but the Punjab Government refused to answer the question :—

“ In reply to a question asked on behalf of S. Kapoor Singh, Syed Amjad Ali, Private Parliamentary Secretary, stated that Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, General Secretary, All-India Congress Socialist Party,

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was arrested recently in the Punjab under Rule 129 and was detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. There had been no deterioration in his health which was good at the time of his arrest and no decrease in his weight which was normal at the time of his arrest. He was being given food prescribed for first class Security Prisoners and was being given newspapers and books to read. It was not considered in public interests to tell when and where he was arrested and whether and to whom any reward was paid for helping the Police in making the arrest. It was also not considered in public interest to say whether the Government intended to try him in open court.

“A similar question was asked regarding Mr. Inder Prakash Anand’s arrest. It was stated on behalf of the Government that he was arrested in connection with subversive activities.”

Mr. Pardiwala who came from Bombay to plead a *habeas Corpus* petition on behalf of Jai Prakash was also arrested and harassed by the Punjab Police. Then came K. M. Munshi to plead the case of Mr. Pardiwala and Jai Prakash Narain. The following proceedings took place in the Central Legislative Assembly on November 13, 1943 :—

“In the Central Assembly two adjournment motions tabled by Mr. Govind Deshmukh relating

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to Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and his counsel were ruled out by the chair.

The first motion sought to discuss the arrest of Mr. Pardiwala, who was defending Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and his removal to "an unknown destination."

The President ; I suppose the Punjab Government ordered the arrest.

Mr. Deshmukh said that his information was that the arrest was made under the Government of India's order. He added that though the action was taken by the provincial Government, it was on Government of India's authority.

Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, stated that no order whatever was issued by the Government of India, nor was any action taken under their instructions.

The President observed that in view of the Home Member's statement, it must be assumed that some provincial Government was responsible for the order, and therefore the motion was out of order.

In the second motion Mr. Deshmukh made allegations of "inhuman" treatment of Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and in reply to the chair's question stated that Mr. Jai Prakash Narain was made to sit on a block of ice, and on a chair without a back.

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He was not allowed to sleep and was not properly fed.

The Home Member: How does the Hon. Member know all this ?

Mr. Deshmukh said that he knew for a fact and that was why he was stating them.

The Home Member stated that Mr. Jai Prakash Narain was a prisoner of the Punjab Government and the adjournment motion was really directed against that Government and not against the Government of India. The matter, he added, had already been before the Punjab Legislature and had been under discussion there. It did not concern the Government of India at all.

Mr. Joshi asked under whose order was Mr. Jai Prakash arrested.

The Home Member stated that he was arrested because he was a fugitive from justice.

Mr. Deshmukh : Is not justice and humanity a concern of this House ?

The Chair remarked that it was also the concern of the Provincial Legislature and added that there was no proof of the treatment alleged in the motion.

Voices : Proof will be forthcoming. There is, not even a denial by the Government.

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The motion was ruled out of order.

Pardiwala was released and straightaway he left for Bombay. But all efforts to move a *habeas corpus* petition on behalf of Jai Prakash Narain proved unsuccessful. The Government simply refused to budge an inch. They made him a state prisoner and put him beyond the jurisdiction of the law courts.

So Noble Narain has to undergo police brutalities every day of his life. He is behind prison bars when country needs him the most. The Labour Government has done nothing to fulfil their promises. Clement Attlee has quite out-Churchilled even Winston Churchill. So the Indian patriots, thousands of them, rot in prisons on the very eve of elections in the country. And Fascist Britain, in spite of its democratic professions, stands adamant.

But if his name is associated so much with that of other leaders of the Congress, and one cannot think of them, without at the same time thinking about him, it is because of the common cause for which all have worked—Anti-Fascism. Jaiprakash has taken notable part in framing this Congress policy of Anti-Fascism over a period of twelve years, when Germany first began the *Drang nach Osten* or drive to the East. From America, for which country he had always had immense love because it was there that

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he learned to love Socialism and democracy, he brought also his internationalist outlook. At the time he returned from America, the fatal isolationism of the later thirties and early forties, had not yet taken roots, and hostility against Japan for its action in China was widespread, as became later on evident from the Secretary of State Stimson's speech in which he warned Japan to take "Hands off China." It was in such an atmosphere of Anti-Fascist sentiments, that Jai Prakash's internationalism took deep roots. On his return, he found a colleague and a leader of similar Anti-Fascist views in Jawahar Lal Nehru. Both collaborated in building up the foundations of a policy of unrelenting opposition to the dictators.

Jawahar Lal Nehru was in prison when Jai Prakash was released in 1933, and started mobilising public opinion against dictators and for socialism, freedom and democracy, in India. For three years which intervened between the release of Nehru, and his return from abroad, where he had gone after his release, and Jai Prakash's coming out from prison—the entire work of Congress Foreign policy fell on the shoulders of the younger Anti-Fascist leader. The Congress Socialist Party then faced the task of smashing the opposition to socialism inside the Congress as well as discouraging the tendencies towards isolationism, and infusing a broad inter-

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nationalist outlook in the country. Resolutions such as the one against Italian action in Abyssynia in 1935, and against Japanese and German Fascism which were moved at Lucknow and Faizpur Congress, owe their wide support to the work carried on by Jai Prakash and his colleagues in those days. If these men had not been there, Nehru would have all the same protested against Fascist danger to India, and the world, but it would have been a feeble protest in any case and the public demonstrations against Italy and Japan would have been weak too. Nehru guided the Congressmen in foreign policy. He was the chief spokesman against Fascism. But who took to every street, every village, and every home the message of the Congress? It was no doubt the younger element consisting of the rank and full supporters of Nehru and Jai Prakash Narain.

These leaders were the enthusiastic supporters of the resolutions against the axis in the Congress session. If that enthusiasm had been absent, the 'Congress' may have been swamped by isolationist elements. Yet greater mass effort had to be made against the axis in 1937. When the Congress passed a resolution of boycott of the Japanese goods, and branded Japan as aggressor in China. Once again men like Jai Prakash had to play immense role in carrying on this big campaign against Jap militarism. There

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were obvious difficulties in the way, because the Japanese trade had established foothold in India and the Jap Government continued to have here its Counsels-General and trade experts, the policy of appeasement of Japan carried on by the western countries having permitted diplomatic relations, with these Zulus in tophats. As a result of this policy a section of businessmen had sprung up here ; influential capitalists, no doubt, who found trade with aggressor Japan to their advantage, and if the socialists were not there in the Congress to stonewall any permeation by such elements, it would have been extremely difficult to carry on a policy of boycott of Japanese goods, or even frame such a policy. They had therefore a triple task before them, fighting isolationism in Congress and Pro-Japanese Industrialists in the country and at the same time carrying on among the masses a campaign against the axis.

Thus we find that when the term of Nehru's Presidentship had ended, the Socialist interpretation of Congress foreign policy continued to hold good. Nehru's place was occupied by Subhas Bose, himself an avowed Anti-Fascist in those days, but here again, if there was not a strong party in the Congress to carry on the previous Anti-Fascist policy, difficulties would have been created in the path of Bose. So at Haripura and Tripuri, the axis continued to receive

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a severe handling at the hands of the Congress. While in some European countries, they were only demonstrating against the Jap atrocities in Canton, and Nanking, here in the year 1938, and 1939, they continued to carry on the programme of boycott of Jap goods. Towards the end of 1938, and early months of 1939, there were internal organisational crises inside the Congress. The presidential elections were straining the relations of various groups, and when the President had been elected, there was no end of controversy even then. In this turmoil one might expect that the Congress Foreign policy of anti-Fascism may have gone by default—of course if there were no party like that of Jai Prakash pledged to action against the dictators.

Thus opposition or internal crises did not stand in the way of the Socialist leader in execution of his programme.

Foreign affairs, however, did not alone occupy the attention of Jaiprakash Narain. He was intensely interested in freedom and democracy at home too. If he had imbibed marxism, and the international ideas in America, he viewed the world affairs much as a progressive American would—that is, he was anti-Fascist, but at the same time had the interests of his country dear to him. This should not be understood either as patriotism of the Churchill type, or that

self-interest, which the Wall Street capitalists have in view in all their dealings. Jaiprakash Narain is patriotic, but he would not sacrifice the interests of other countries to preserve that of his own. The American view in world affairs in his case meant, that he wanted freedom and socialism in his country without in any way compromising his anti-Fascist outlook. In this way his ideas could be nearer to those of Mr. Wendell Willkie, except for the fact that the latter has not affirmed faith in marxian Socialism. To Jaiprakash the American saying that "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom," was the guiding star in his political life. Vigilance of freedom in case of India meant preventing the Congress policy from degenerating into mere Parliamentary activities. Once the Congressmen had decided on acceptance of offices—it aimed at preservation of democracy inside the Congress and determination to have Socialism as the ultimate goal of the country, as soon as freedom was secured.

In the years in which he carried on the campaign for strengthening the anti-Fascist cause inside the congress, he had also to remain active on the Home Front. Radical land reform, organisation of workers and peasants, defence of their rights, and refusal to allow the Congress to become a battleground of factional differences between the followers of

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Subhas Bose, and those of Gandhi, are the landmarks of his achievement on the Home Front.

In this connection one might mention the activities of Federation of Labour and the Congress of industrial organisations in America during the same period. These organisations also claimed to be working in the interests of labour, democracy and peace.

But the A. F. of L. was reactionary, anti-Russian, and isolationist. Its activities were mainly confined to industrial disputes in which it often played the game of the American capitalists. The other organisation C. I. O. was radical in outlook in world affairs and wanted Socialism at home but it was dominated by those groups which wanted to keep its activities confined to purely industrial matters. The C.I.O. quite prominent these days in anti-Fascist activities was then in this matter a backnumber. Jaiprakash's home policy had nothing in common with these American organisations.

It could be described as resembling that of the American Socialist Norman Thomas, who believed in freedom and socialism at home, but then he was isolationist, and his main concern was to keep America out of war. To Jaiprakash steeped in the Marxist tradition, war seemed the inevitable result of the rise of Fascism, and its bid for world hegemony. He saw it clearly that for freedom to

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survive, it must face the menace of Fascism and destroy it with force.

This brings us to *Chronique de Septembre* in India, when Working Committee passed its resolution on war. Jaiprakash took a prominent part in the discussions, and though resolution was framed by Nehru, it was couched in the language of previous anti-Fascist utterances of the Socialist leaders. The war was interpreted according to the Marxist theory as clash of rival Imperialisms, and India's determination to end Fascism was voiced, and while there was no desire to take advantage of the situation of Great Britain, the claim about the right of this country to manage its own affairs was made.

Gandhiji had a different plan up his sleeves. He wanted to give unconditional support to Britain but it was to be a non-violent one, which of course meant that Congress was to remain pledged to moral support and nothing else. Jaiprakash, and the Socialists wanted that India should throw all her resources on the side of freedom, as soon as she had been liberated herself. They had in the past not confined themselves to mere moral support to the anti-Fascist cause, that they should do the same now.

But while violent resistance to Fascism remained the anchor-sheet of their policy in foreign affairs, in

home affairs these people stood for complete non-violence. In view of the fact that Jaiprakash like other Congress leaders is accused of having encouraged violent activities in the country against Congress, it is important to remember his attitude towards non-violence from the very beginning. True, he had imbibed scientific Socialism in America, but he felt that in case of India, it was not to be a violent revolution—the freedom was to be won with non-violence and when that was done, one could have a whole-hog Socialist regime. In fact in the early days of the Congress Socialist party the old school Nationalists, and believers in economic doctrine of *laessez-faire*, who were very much alarmed at the growing strength of the Socialists tried to create panic about them among the people. The scare-mongering was carried on under the cry of the danger of class-war and forcible expropriation if the Socialist campaign continued. The Socialists replied that class-war was not of their making. It was inherent in the capitalist system, which antagonised one class from another and as for the use of force the Socialists were pledged to the non-violence policy of the Congress. They might have added that most of those who had constituted the socialist party, had not only taken the pledge of non-violence but also fulfilled it during the civil disobedience campaign

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in 1930-32, for they might have now adopted the name of Congress socialists, before that they were Congressmen. That was the first test to which their non-violence had been put. The second was the squeezing-out campaign carried on by the older nationalists against them from 1933-37. These people had made their existence impossible in the Congress. If they had not been steeped in the doctrine of non-violence they might have revolted and come out of the Congress, and set up a separate organisation.

The third example of their heroic spirit of non-violence was during the term of Congress Ministries, when the capitalists, and the landlords had subjected them to the greatest provocation by their treatment towards the Trade Unions and the Kisan Sabhas respectively. They had borne all peacefully and pinned their hope in whatever action was taken by the Congress ministries instead of resorting to even Satyagraha themselves. And finally in the civil disobedience of 1940 when the object was not to embarrass Britain, the Socialists gave proof of being a disciplined non-violent group.

So much about their non-violent role in Indian politics, and their sufferings in this cause. The men who constituted the party and continued to carry on

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its work were no doubt steeped in non-violent tradition, but the party itself was the result of the disappointment of the youth of the country with path of violence. Socialism was the only alternative to terrorism, which was galore in India right up to 1933. Violence as a method of political warfare had become discredited. Nationalism, without any defining of attitude towards economic matters, seemed to be inadequate after the world crisis of 1929. Hence the trend towards socialism, which provided a happy contract to both terrorism and nationalism.

If the Congress socialist party was born in such an atmosphere, its work was not limited to demonstrating its own non-violent spirit, but also discouraging the tendencies towards violence.

In those days of early thirties terrorism was not the only danger with which the democratic parties had to contend. There was a swing towards the right in all countries, and Fascism with its glorification of highly organised and efficient violence was no less tempting for youth than terrorism. The craze of military discipline, and uniforms evident in the activities of the Khaksars, was widespread. These people who lured the youth of the country found in socialists stern-enemies of their

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anti-democratic activities. Quite sensibly Jaiprakash and his followers thought that any deviation from democracy or tendencies towards authoritarianism inside the Congress meant an encouragement to people who wanted to tamper with Gandhian technique of political warfare. They saw it clearly that the civil disobedience of 1930-32 had failed, but they did not want to make political capital out of it or change the basis of Congress struggle. They wanted the Congress to become more representative of the workers, and the peasants, so that they should take an increasing part in its struggle and make it successful but so far as democracy and non-violence were concerned it was not to be tampered with in any ideas smacking of Nazi or Fascist doctrine introduced in the Congress.

The efforts of the Socialists to prevent hegemony in Congress of either Forward Bloc or the Gandhists who wanted to have their any way in all matters, was a step in the direction of maintaining democracy in Congress. It was a task difficult enough—this treading of the middle way. The British Labour Party which claims to be Socialist, but is not, tried to tread the same way. But the British conservatives have had the upper hand and though anti-Fascism continues to be the policy of both groups, the Labour

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Party has become to all intents and purpose a part and parcel of the party or machine.

Jaiprakash who faced the danger from the conservatives in side the Congress, has been able to maintain independence of his group so that he may again play a decisive role as the watchman of democracy in India and abroad against its Fascist enemies. There is no doubt that if there is a settlement between the Congress and the Government he would like Nehru come forward to complete his past unfinished struggle for democracy and prevent the aggressor from making an end of freedom in India.

CHAPTER VIII

“Quit India” Quagmire.

THE Government was quick to arrest the Congress leaders, but it was not quick enough to arrest the Congress movement. The eighth of August, nineteen hundred and forty-two, will be remembered as a day of national struggle in the history of India. The British Government held the Congress Working Committee responsible for disturbances, and it laid the lion's share of responsibility on the restless shoulders of Jai Prakash Narain. Whether he actually played that glorious part or not, he will always be remembered as the idol of do-and-die struggle in every patriotic breast.

There is no doubt that the disturbances did occur. The Congress laid responsibility on the Government. And the Government shuffled it on to the Congress. The public demanded an explanation. And several demands did reach the Government from several quarters. “In response to demands” the Government prepared a review. It brought together a number of facts “whether derived from official documents or otherwise.” But it failed to prove that the Congress High Command had

engineered the revolutionary movement. But then it crowned its weakness with the glory of State secrecy. "The review," said the Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, "does not purport to disclose all the information, in the possession of the Government. In addition to the facts here stated, there is a large volume of evidence which it is undesirable to publish at present."

So the Government published only that much which it considered desirable. And this desirable element was all one side of the case. The strength of the Congress lay in the undesirable element which the Government considered unpublishable. The Government need not have presented the case at all unless it could present the whole of it.

The "Quit India" Movement was crystallized by Mahatma Gandhi. He deplored the introduction of foreign soldiers into India. The British should have left India to her fate, as they quitted Singapore. Non-violent India would lose nothing. And Japan would probably leave India alone.

"Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India," said Gandhiji, "her real safety and Britain's too lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal from India."

There is no doubt that Gandhiji set the stage for a mass movement designed to free India finally

from the British yoke. But it was a non-violent movement. We ought to have a clear understanding of the motives underlying the move. Without an ample insight into these motives, we are likely to be grossly misled. Gandhiji demanded a political rather than practical withdrawal of British paramountcy. A non-violent struggle was to be launched should the Government not retire voluntarily. The centre of interest would shift from Sevagram to other parts of the country.

"Of course," said Gandhiji, "the people must not on any account bear on the Japanese to get rid of the British Power. That was a remedy worse than the disease. But as I have already said, in this struggle, every risk has to be run in order to cure ourselves of the biggest disease—a disease which has sapped our manhood and almost made us feel as if we must for ever be slaves. It is an insufferable thing. The cost of the cure, I know, will be heavy. No price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance."

It has a true patriotic note. And nobody can deny its patriotism. The British Government need have no quarrel with other patriotic sense. Nobody can be an Indian unless he is a patriot. And the British authorities should not have quarrel about that. If the freedom of speech does not mean an unfettered expression of nationalism, surely it

means nothing at all. No Congressman should be expected to dispose of his country. Surely no price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance.

Given a fair trial, Indian non-violent resistance is capable of attaining maximum effectiveness. If the people are imbued with this doctrine, they can accomplish a miracle. A spiritual army need not bow to the gathering force of military opposition. If Gandhiji had had his way, the Indian National Government, when formed, would have tolerated the presence of the United Nations on Indian soil under certain well-defined conditions. But it would have permitted no further assistance. Free India did envisage allowing Allied troops to operate from India. "It will be only then," he said, "that you will see real co-operations." Gandhiji did not contemplate the complete shifting of Allied troops from India.

"Japan's quarrel," said Gandhiji, "is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan."

Thus "Quit-India" was expanding into "Quit-Asia" Movement. India bore no enmity against Japan. India only desired freedom from foreign domination. And this India could attain and retain through her non-violent strength. The hope was expressed that Japan would not have any

designs on India. Should she attack India, all Indians would look up to the Congress for guidance. And the Congress would lead them on the thorny road of non-violent non-co-operation with the Japanese.

Withdrawal of British troops would create a vacuum, said Jawaharlal. And this vacuum could not be filled up immediately. We could not resist Japan through non-violent methods. If Britain goes away, Japan would make headway. And India would have little scope for organising itself. If we followed non-violence, if Quit-India were successful, we were running into the arms of Japan.

"Japan", said C. Rajagopalachariar, "will fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. Our reaction to the evils of Britain should not make us lose our sense of perspective."

So Mahatma Gandhi reached the cross-roads of his mind. If he was wedded to the doctrine of non-violence, then he must not think of "Quit-India". But if he wanted the British to quit India, then he must part with his cherished doctrine. Manfully Mahatma Gandhi decided to fling away his philosophy on the lofty altar of India's independence.

II.

"The [dish was to be served up," says the Government report, "in such a way as least to antagonize world opinion."

The Congress agreed to the stationing of Allied troops in India to ward off Japanese attack. But it was not a diplomatic move. Quit-India was never seriously intended to mean military withdrawal. It was only symbolical of transfer of political power. And the Government Report misrepresented what was simply a classification of “Quit-India.” There was no striking change of front in Gandhiji.

There was no glaring oversight in his previous declaration. A man of Gandhiji’s mental calibre can be guilty of vagueness, but not of insincerity. Here is the bugle-call of Mahatmaji :—

“ I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed and worked for may never come, and in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks which are obviously involved I must ask the people to resist the slavery.”

And Mahatma Gandhi also issued a word of warning to the Japanese to sweep away any cobweb of misconception that may be left behind :

“We are in the unique position of having to face an imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism.”

Gandhiji wanted to see India entirely free from any form of foreign domination. Also he did not want India to become a battlefield between India and Japan. He wanted to check the growing ill-will against Britain. He desired to build up a spirit of resistance to aggression among Indians. By granting India's millions immediate freedom, Britain could have released that energy and enthusiasm which alone could enable India to play an effective part in her own defence and in the defence of democracy.

The removal of foreign power, with its policy of divide and rule, would have paved the way for communal harmony. We could have easily formed a provisional Government, representative of all sections of the Indian people.

The Bombay Resolution of August, 8, 1942 summed up the goal of the Congress as follows :—

- (i) To remove foreign domination over India.
- (ii) To check the growing ill-will against Britain, with its danger of passive acceptance by the masses of aggression against India; to build up a spirit of resistance to aggression among Indians ; and by granting India's millions immediate freedom to release that energy and enthusiasm whihc

alone can enable India to play an effective part in her own defence and in war as a whole.

- (iii) To achieve communal unity, by the removal of the foreign power with its policy of divide and rule, which will be followed by the formation of a provisional Government representative of all sections of the Indian people.
- (iv) To bring all subject and oppressed humanity to the side of the United Nations, thus giving these nations the moral and spiritual leadership of the world.
- (v) To assist Asiatic nations under foreign domination to regain their freedom and ensure that they are not again placed under the rule of any colonial power.
- (vi) To bring about a world federation, which would ensure the disbanding of national armies, navies and air forces, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all.

With these ideals the Congress requested the Government to quit. “I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus,” said Mahatma Gandhi. “Let them entrust India to God or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then

all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos."

III

Gandhiji determined that the withdrawal of British from India was a "supreme act". To the realisation of this supreme act he devoted his entire energy. He was thinking in terms of a final struggle against the British. He was prepared to run every risk so that India should be cured of the disease of British domination. The spell of slavery must be lifted.

"It is an insufferable thing," he said. "The cost of the cure I know will be heavy. No price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance."

"It will be a move," he said, "which will be felt by the whole world. It may not interfere with the movement of British troops, but it is sure to engage British attention."

"It is worth fighting for," said Gandhi, "it is worth staking all that the nation has."

"They (Indians) will fight," said Gandhi, "not to seize power, but to end the foreign domination, cost what it may."

"Ours is an unarmed revolt against British Rule," said Gandhi.

“There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation,” said Gandhi. “There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion.”

The very definition of non-violence underwent a change in the plastic hands of Mahatma Gandhi :—

“If a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, I should say he is fighting non-violently. Haven’t I said to our women that, if in defence of their dagger, I should regard their conduct as non-violent. She does not know the distinction between *Himsa* and *Ahimsa*. She acts spontaneously. Supposing a mouse fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp teeth, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand bravely against the German hordes vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violent.”

IV

The Government worked with an iron hand. The Congress leaders were arrested in Bombay. Throughout the country a round-up of important Congressmen took place. The disturbances may be immediately attributed to this Government repression.

“On August 9th,” says the Government Report, “there were disturbances in Bombay, Ahmed-

abad and Poona, but the rest of the country remained quiet. On August 10th disturbances occurred also in Delhi and a few towns in the United Provinces; but still no serious repercussions were reported from elsewhere. It was from August 11th that the situation began to deteriorate rapidly. From then onwards, apart from hartals, protest meetings and similar demonstrations that were to be expected, concerted outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder, and sabotage took place and in almost all cases these were directed against communications of all kinds (including railways, posts and telegraphs) or against the Police. Moreover, these outbreaks started almost simultaneously in widely separated areas in the Provinces of Madras, Bombay and Bihar, and also in the Central and United Provinces. Finally, the damage done was so extensive as to make it incredible that it could have been perpetrated on the spur of the moment without special implements and previous preparation; and in many instances the manner in which it was done displayed a great deal of technical knowledge. Block instruments and control rooms in Railway Stations were singled out for destruction; and the same technical skill appeared over and over again both in the selection of objects for attack on the railways in P. and T. offices and lines, and on electric power lines and installations—and also

in the manner in which the damage was carried out. On the other hand, and this is a significant fact—industrial plant and machinery, even where it was fully employed on Government work, escaped any serious injury.”

The attempts to develop a non-violent civil disobedience moment proved abortive. The birthday of Gandhiji afforded a temporary stimulus. But there was no public enthusiasm for such a programme. At the end of November instructions for no-tax, no-rent and no-grain campaign were issued. These instructions outlined a programme designed to paralyse the Government. It cut off its sources of revenue. It undermined confidence in the Government. It weakened the position of currency. It developed parallel government in the form of independent village communities. The campaign gathered momentum.

“From the beginning of the struggle,” says the Government Report, “The Congress Socialist Party, a group within the main party and an integral part of the Congress, had played an important part with Bombay as its main centre. The escape from Hazaribagh Jail in early November of Jaiprakash Narain, the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, the same man whose detected attempt to smuggle letters from Delhi in 1941 had caused such a sensation and who in

those letters had poured scorn on the "farce of satyagraha" and had called for the organization of a secret wing which would not pay even lip service to the creed of non-violence--further increased the influence of this left-wing section of the Congress. With the arrest from time to time of certain of the other leaders, Jaiprakash Narain came to play an increasingly important part in the direction of a movement, which was not indistinguishable from an underground revolutionary movement with all the trappings of terrorism, political dacoity, unscrupulous opportunism and complete disregard of the safety and welfare of the general public."

It is true that the Congress Socialist Party took a prominent part in the Quit-India Movement, but then the Government has made serious uncalled-for allegations against its General Secretary. The letters supposed to have been smuggled have long been proved to have been fabricated by Shri Jaiprakash Narain; but it is not the habit of bureaucracy to take note of a fact which is not in their favour. He has never called the individual non-violent non-co-operation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi as the "farce of satyagraha." Mr. Narain did organize a secret wing. But to state that "would not pay even lip service to the creed of non-violence" is to grossly mis-state the

fact. With the arrest from time to time of certain of the other leaders, it is true Jaiprakash Narain came to play an increasingly important part in the direction of the "Quit-India" Movement. It was no doubt an underground revolution. But it had no trappings of terrorism. There was no political dacoity. Sabotage was confined to the directives of Mahatma Gandhi. To state that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain could be accused of "unscrupulous opportunism" is not to understand Jaiprakash Narain. "Complete disregard of the safety and welfare of the general public" is the last thing to be expected from him. It is strange how the official journalists can over-reach themselves in order to please their bosses. Complete disregard of the British safety and welfare of the general bureaucratic public is the worse that should have been expected from Jaiprakash Narain.

V

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain was alleged by the Government to have issued a leaflet entitled "To All Fighters For Freedom" and addressed to the country with "revolutionary greetings." The Red Fugitive is supposed to have addressed his comrades :—

"Let me first of all offer you and those comrades who have been made prisoners of war my heartiest congratulations on

the magnificent battle already given to the enemy. Nothing like it ever happened or was expected to happen in this our long suffering and suppressed country. It truly was the "Open Rebellion" envisaged by our incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi."

The Rebellion seemed to have been suppressed for the moment. But it had been suppressed, said Narain, only for the moment. This should cause anybody no surprise. As a matter of fact, had the very first assault been successful, it would have been a matter for surprise. We should not expect to crush completely the imperial citadel at one blow. Nevertheless the enemy admitted that the revolution came pretty near destroying his power. It shows how successful was the first phase of our national Revolution.

"And how was the first phase suppressed?" asks J. P. Narain. "Was it the military power of the enemy, his unmitigated reign of goondaism, looting, arson and murder that did the job? No. It [is wrong to consider the Revolt as having been suppressed." The history of all Revolutions shows that a Revolution is not an event. It is a phase, a social process. And during the Evolution of a Revolution tides and ebbs are normal. Our revolution is at present going through the period of low water

so soon rather than rise to higher heights and go from victory to victory, not because the superior physical force of the imperialist aggressors intervened but because of two important reasons."

Mr. Jaiprakash proceeds to analyse the two important causes. Firstly there was no efficient organisation. The national revolutionary forces could not give effective lead to the mighty forces of patriotism that were released. The Revolution could rise to a high pitch. But the Congress was not attuned to that level. The lack of organisation was considerable. Even important Congressmen were not aware of the progress of the Revolt.

"Till late in the course of rising," he says, "it remained a matter of debate in many congress quarters whether what the people were doing was really in accordance with the Congress programme."

Many influential Congressmen failed to attune their minds to the revolutionary spirit. Earnestness, urgency and determination marked the attitude of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel. But it failed to reflect in the heads and hearts of all Congress leaders.

"Secondly, after the first phase of the rising was over, there was no further programme placed before the people. After they had completely des-

troysed the British Raj in their areas, the people considered their task fulfilled, and went back to their homes, not knowing what more to do. Nor was it their fault. The failure was ours; we should have supplied them with programme for the next phase. When this was not done, the Revolt came to a standstill and the phase of the ebb began."

Nobody can deny the logic of these arguments put forward by Mr. J. P. Narain. The phase of ebb was created many days before the British soldiers arrived. This interval should have been usefully employed. But it was not. The British soldiers pushed back to receding works of the revolt.

"What programme could have been placed before the people in the second phase?" says Narain. "The answer is suggested by the nature of Revolutions. A Revolution is not only a destructive process, it is at the same time a great constructive force. No Revolution could proceed if it only destroyed. Our Revolution too having accomplished over large territories of the country the negative task of destruction, called for a positive programme. The people who destroyed the objects and means of administration of the foreign power and drove away its agents should have set up in their areas own units of Revolutionary Government and created their own police and militia. Had this been done, it would have released such an unprecedented

volume of energy and opened up such a vast field for constructive work that the waves of the Revolution would have mounted higher and higher still—if the rising was countrywide—the imperialist power had been broken and the people had seized supreme authority throughout the land.”

Thus there were two causes of the downward course of the first phase of the August Revolution. First, the lack of efficient organization. Second, the absence of efficient programme.

Consequently, all depression must be banished from the minds of the people. An atmosphere of hope should be created. Think of the success achieved and the expected. The nature of the Revolution must be kept steadfastly before the people. It was our last fight for freedom. Victory should be alone our objective. There can be no half-way houses.

“The efforts that men like Rajagopalachari are making for the establishment of National Government,” said Mr. Narain, “are not only fruitless, but positively harmful in as much as they distract public attention from the real issues. There is no compromise between the slogans of “Quit-India” and of a “national government.” Those who are running after the alogan of Congress-League unity are merely serving the ends of imperialist propaganda. It is not the lack of unity

that is obstructing the formation of a national government, but the natural unwillingness of imperialism to liquidate itself."

Mr. Churchill left no manner of doubt about it. He frankly declared that he had not assumed the office of the King's first Minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. Empires cannot wither away of their own accord. He would indeed be a foolish student of society who expected that. The Indian Empire cannot be wished away by the catachysmic force of humble memorials. If we think so, we are making of ourselves the most pitiable fools of history.

"It is not the unity of all the important elements in India life, to quote the imperialist jargon," says Narain, "that is the need of the hour but the unity of all the national revolutionary forces. And these are already united under the flag of the Congress. Unity between the League and the Congress does not foreshadow the growth of these forces, but their absolute relation, for the League cannot conceivably tread the path of revolution and freedom."

The objective needs must be the complete overthrow of imperialism. "There can be no compromise on this issue," says Narain. "Either we win or we lose. And lose we shall not. Not only because we are determined ceaselessly to work for

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victory, but also because powerful world forces are drawing the doom of imperialism and fascism ever nearer and nearer.”

VI.

“Do not believe,” continues Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, “that the formal results of this war, settled laboriously at the Peace Conference, would settle the fate of the post-war world. War is a strange alchemist, and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war decided that four mighty empires of Europe and Asia should fall into dust—the Russian, the German, the Austrian and the Ottoman. Nor, was the Russian, the German, the Turkish Revolution decreed by Lloyd George Clemencean or Wilson.”

Men are fighting, suffering and dying throughout the world to-day. “The alchemist is at work, just as he is in India, where he has already let loose a mighty social upheaval. Neither Churchill, nor Roosevelt, neither Hitler nor Tojo will determine the fate of the world at the end of this war.” None of them exists to-day. Churchill has been dismissed disgracefully. Roosevelt is dead. Hitler has concealed himself. Tojo is taking poison. How correct was Mr. J. P. Narain’s prophecy !

“It is force,” says Narain, “such as we represent that will fulfil that historic task. Can we doubt

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that revolutionary forces are stirring everywhere? Can we believe that millions of people are undergoing unutterable suffering without a thought for the future? Can we believe that the millions are satisfied with the lies that their rulers daily feed them with. No, it cannot be so."

We must fix our vision on the goal of total victory. We must march ahead. "What works must we do?" he asks. "What does a general do when he loses or wins a battle?" We must consolidate and prepare for the next battle. Alexander turned his serious defeat into a resounding victory. "Ours was not even a defeat", he says. "We really won the first round of the fight inasmuch as our large territories of the country the civil rule of the British aggressor was completely uprooted. The masses have now learnt from experience that the imposing edifice of the police and magistracy and law-courts and prisons which goes by the name of British Raj is but a house of cards when they hurl against either collective power."

This lesson is not likely to be forgotten. And it constitutes the starting point for the next move. So we must prepare for the next major offensive.

"The next offensive?" asks Mr. Narain. "When do we expect to launch the next offensive? Some people think that the masses will not rise again for the next five or six years. This estimate might be true."

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of peace time, but it does hold good for a stormy war-torn world of fast moving events. The savage tyrannies of the British fascists—the Linlithgows, the Hallets, the Stewards, and the cruelties of others and their base Indian Lackeys—may have compelled the people to lie low for the present, but they have nowhere converted them into friends of the oppressors. The whole countryside, where this British type of Nazi Hell was let loose, is seething with the most intense discontent, anger and thirst for revenge. The people have merely to understand that powerful preparations are afoot to take courage again and to enter the plans and schemes for the next offensive, with, active, co-ordinated and disciplined work ; it would be wholly favourable for the next assault.”

International events were coming to the aid of India. The “fast unto death” was also a constant reminder that Gandhiji did not want the people to slacken, to waver or to rest on the oars. The question of the next offensive was linked up with the question of the positive task of the Revolution. The units of the Revolutionary Government shall be established. The question of violence and armed forces was bound up with this move.

During “Quit-India” there was some violence indeed under extreme provocation. It was remarkably little as compared with the magnitude of the Rising. There was almost staggering manifestation of

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individual and collective non-violence. In many places, the Government was literally at the mercy of the masses." The people took compassion on their foes. They spared them their lives and property.

"And what of the cool, sublime courage of those thousands of young and old who received the enemy's bullets on their chests with the flag of revolution in their hands and *Inqlab Zindabad* on their lips? Have the British a word of praise for this godly courage?

"In any case is it not remarkable that the British power which is soaked in violence, which is based on violence, which daily commits the most pitiless forms of violence, which grinds down millions of people and sacks their life-blood should make much noise about the violence that others commit? How are the British concerned with what weapons we choose to fight with them? Have they pledged non-violence if the rebels adhere to it? Have they not already shot down thousands of our non-violent soldiers? Whatever weapons we use the British have only bullets for us and looting and rape and arson. So let them keep quiet as to how we fight them, if it is our business entirely to decide that."

Non-violence is the life-principle of Gandhiji. But non-violence is no faith with the Congress.

"Congress has repeatedly stated during this war that if India became free, or even if a National Government

were set up, it would be prepared to resist aggression with arms. But, if we are prepared to fight Japan and Germany with arms, why must we refuse to fight Britain in the same manner? The only possible answer can be that the Congress in power could have an army, whereas the Congress in wilderness has none. But supposing a revolutionary army were created or if the present Indian army or a part of it rebel, would it not be inconsistent for us first to ask the army to rebel and then ask the rebels to lay down arms and face British bullets with bared chest?”

The position of the Congress is clear. The position of Mahatma Gandhi is vague. The Congress has chosen to differ from Gandhi. The Government has not allowed Gandhiji to shape his policy. Hence, we should discharge our duties in the light of other reason.

“As far as I am concerned,” says Mr. Narain, “I feel that I should be completely justified as an honest Congressman, without in any manner intruding my socialism upon the question, in repelling the British aggression with arms.

“I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practised on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but when such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.”

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Consequently, the revolution must be kept clearly in the mind. We should prepare, organize, train and discipline our forces. "In everything we do, we have constantly to bear in mind that ours is not to be merely a conspiratorial action. "It is total result of the masses that is our objective. So an intensive work must be carried out among the masses. There is a call for ceaseless propaganda. Selected soldiers must be recruited from the masses. "With training," says Narain, "a few may succeed when thousands failed before." Then there is work in the Indian Army, services, schools and colleges, factories and market place.

"Much has been done at present," says Narain, "but vastly more remains to be done." Who but the youth can accomplish all this? They have already set a brilliant record. They must follow up their achievements. They must vindicate the promises they have given. Narain said :

"With full confidence in the people and devotion to the cause, let us, then, march ahead. Let our steps be firm, our hearts resolute and our vision undimmed. The sun of freedom has already risen above the horizon. Let not the clouds of our own doubts and disputes, inaction and faithlessness, obscure the sun and drown us in our self-created darkness."

APPENDIX

How Jai Prakash Narain was Arrested

Even though it is now more than two years and two months when the reputed Congress socialist leader Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, was arrested, yet circumstances under which Mr. Jai Prakash was "captured" by the Punjab Police have remained an unsolved mystery. Circumstances of his arrest, the names of the persons who arrested him as also the place of his arrest have remained a most guarded secret. Mr. Jai Prakash carried a reward of Rs. 10,000 "for his head". For various reasons the Punjab authorities succeeded in maintaining complete secrecy about Mr. "J. P.'s" arrest all these long years and even when the Punjab press tried to know the circumstances relating to his captivity, the Punjab authorities persistently refused to divulge any news beyond saying: "He was arrested in the Punjab".

The mystery has, however, been partly solved by one of the Punjab security prisoners who wa

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recently released after about two years' detention which he suffered on account of the suspicion of his association with Mr. Jai Prakash. This security prisoner was detained in the Lahore Fort at the same time when Mr. Jai Prakash was there. It is learnt that "J. P." was arrested in the moving Frontier Mail on the morning of September 18, 1943, between Amritsar and Lahore. Mr. Jai Prakash was travelling from somewhere on his way to some hill station in the north of the Punjab via Delhi.

It appears that the Punjab C. I. D. got information of "J. P.'s" journey through the Punjab in all probability from Delhi and made arrangements to catch India's Socialist Leader Number One by surprise when he least expected of being caught.

Mr. Jai Prakash had an absolutely comfortable journey all the way till the train reached Amritsar where he got up and took his tea. Hardly had he finished his cup and only a short while before the train moved, there stepped in his compartment one European and two Sikh C. I. D. officers, the European being one of the senior most C.I.D. officials. They were dressed in plain clothes and Mr. "J.P." never doubted that they would be the persons who would arrest him. These officers did

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nothing until the train had left Amritsar and while the train was moving between Amritsar and Lahore, a distance of 35 miles the European officer caught hold of Mr. Jai Prakash at the point of his pistol and the two Sikh officers helped their chief in holding up Mr. "J.P." who stood surrounded by men with pistols in their hands while the train was going on at the highest speed. Mr. "Jai Prakash" detrained at Mughalpura a wayside station before Lahore and was then removed to the Lahore Fort where he was detained and later on served with a notice in the second week of December 1943, from the Government of India declaring him a State Prisoner.

While in detention a very high European official of the Punjab Government and a young Muslim Nawab and knight were allowed to meet Mr. "J.P." once a week in accordance with the provisions contained in Regulation III of 1854. Then long and endless interrogations commenced which lasted for an unknown time. Mr. Jai Prakash was sometime later allowed at his own cost, a copy each of the "Tribune" and the "Statesman". But all news about war in the East, proceedings in the Indian Legislatures, and editorial notes, etc., were clipped off before Mr. "J.P." got the copies of his newspaper.

How J. P. Narain's Letters were Seized

Interesting details about the dramatic escape of Comrade Jai Prakash Narain from the Hazari Bagh Jail (Behar) along with his four associates and the interception of his, now well-known, letters by a C. I. D. official of Deoli Detention Camp. have just come to light, through one of his trusted lieutenants. These stories provide a clear index to the sublime character and passionate patriotism of the hero of the 1942 movement.

Feeling an urge within himself that he should not allow himself to stagnate in this fashion, but should resume some contacts with the world outside Deoli Camp, Jai Prakash Narain, succeeded in hypnotising a subordinate official of a Junior Cadre, attached to the Camp, for sending out instructions to his party men outside for starting work. He wrote down a few letters and planned to send them out through that clerk.

The Camp, which was inhabited by about 250 political suspects from all provinces of India, was

How Jai Prakash Narain's Letters were Seized

practically a military Camp, solely in charge of the C. I. D. establishment. It was situated 80 miles from Ajmer and 64 miles from Kotah Junction of B. B. and C. I. Railway. The relatives of the detenus could interview them on two consecutive days. A. C. I. D. official knowing different languages spoken in India used to be present at the interviews.

Big Envelope.

In accordance with the plan, a big envelope, containing letters from Comrades Jai Prakash Narain, Munshi Ahmed Din and Master Mota Singh Anandpuri, was handed over to that clerk for safe delivery to Mrs. Jai Prakash Narain, who was waiting outside for the second day interview with her husband. When no acknowledgment, as settled, was received by the sender, suspicion grew amongst themselves against the clerk. Eventually J. P. received an intimation about the non-delivery of the "valuable" documents. When that "official" messenger was caught hold of and threatened with dire consequences, he said that he could not effect the delivery of the packet, owing to the C. I. D. surveillance. He, however, returned that envelope to Jai Prakash Narain quite intact.

Jai Prakash did not sit idle over it, He was keen that his instructions should reach the desired quarters, as he thought that it was the psychological

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moment for carrying out those plans into action. He thought that he could deliver the envelope himself at the time of the interview with his wife who was then summoned telegraphically for an urgent interview. She did not know the errand for which she was being called so suddenly.

Jai Prakash tried to pass over the envelope to his wife, from beneath the table, at the time of the interview. Mr. Bannerjee, the C. I. D. Sub-Inspector from Behar, who was present at the time of interview, on hearing the sound, suspected and jumped off his seat. He tried to snatch the envelope but failed. J. P. also could not succeed in destroying the envelope, despite his best efforts. Both grappled with each other. A regular scuffle ensued. The C. I. D. official shouted and invoked the assistance of a military sentinel on duty, with whose help, Jai Prakash was deprived of his "valuable documents," as he called the envelope.

Jai Prakash was produced before the Superintendent of the Camp for the breach of the Jail Rules. Lt.-Col. Christopher, Superintendent, scolded him for his conduct and ordered that his interviews and letters should be stopped for a couple of months, adding that no further punishment would be awarded to him, if he undertook not to repeat such a thing in future. "I am a professional law-breaker. I do

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not respect your laws. I am in jail for this very purpose. I have been breaking the laws outside the jail and would not hesitate to break them again, whenever an opportunity occurs. I am prepared for the consequences," was the reply given by Jai Prakash to the warnings of the jail official. Similar punishments were also awarded to Munshi Ahmed Din and Master Mota Singh Anandpuri.

Jail Conference

After a private conference between the various jail officials, it was decided to stick to the punishment already given and forward all the relevant papers, including the document itself, to the Government of India, for further action, if deemed necessary. This incident occurred in July, 1941 and on the 17th October, 1941, some portions from those letters (not the entire text) were released for publication to the papers all over India. This was done, according to the detenus, only to sabotage the threatened hunger-strike, scheduled to take place on the 22nd October, 1941.

The detenus in the Camp did not get their copies of the daily newspapers containing the above publication, which caused a flutter in the Camp. Jai Prakash Narain was summoned by the Superintendent of Jail to his office. After intimating to him that the Government of India had published his

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letters, the Superintendent of Jail brought home to him the fact that the publication, in question, had exposed the Communists before their countrymen, adding that there was an apprehension of their wreaking vengeance upon him in some dastardly fashion. Jai Prakash was further intimated that arrangements had been made for shifting him to a separate corner of the Camp, fenced with barbed wires, etc.

“I would face all consequences for my honest convictions. I will stick to my post and remain with my friends. I refuse to be segregated. The letters contain nothing but private instructions to my colleagues for carrying out work outside. I am prepared for all eventualities.” This spirited reply was given by Jai Prakash to the second warning of the jail officials regarding this episode. The daily papers, which had been held back for a couple of days were then delivered to the detenues, who read with keen interest the various comments on the publication of the letters.

The Socialist detenues had to commence their hunger-strike on the 22nd October and their Communist comrades in the Camp, on the following day.

Mr. S V. Ghate, Communist leader (Madras) apparently excited by the event stated that they

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would wash the blot alleged in the letter with their blood, after hunger-strike unto death. The Communists however gave up their hunger-strike after 15 days and soon raised the slogan of "People's War" and thus washed the blot with their action.

Red Fugitive Released

Jai Prakash Narain was released from the Agra Central Jail in the evening on April 11, 1946. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was also released with him.

I

ESCAPE FROM HAZARIBAGH JAIL.

All the inmates of Hazari Bagh Jail, both prisoners and jail staff were engaged in the celebration of Deepmala festival and a drama was staged inside the jail premises to mark the occasion. According to a well-planned scheme, all this was being done in one side of the jail, while Jai Prakash Narain and his associates were busy in giving final touches to their plan of quitting the jail, for accelerating work outside.

The story of the dramatic escape of Jai Prakash Narain is still a mystery to millions of his countrymen.

Ever since his repatriation to his own province after the abolition of the Deoli Camp, Jai Prakash Narain was constantly brooding over the idea of organising his and his friends' escape from the Jail, with a view to work for the liberation of his motherland, at his psychological moment in the history of the world.

Political prisoners were free to move about in the jail. The daily counting of prisoners inside the jail was not done in case of political prisoners. They had hit at a plan and decided their course of action.

When the entire jail staff was concentrating their attention on the preparations of the stage for the drama,

Escape from Hazaribagh Jail

Jai Prakash Narain, along with B. Rama Nand Misra (one of the biggest landlords of Bihar and a brother of the Rani of Benares), Comrade Suraj Narain Singh, Babu Jogindra Shukla and another companion succeeded in escaping from the jail after scaling the big walls with the aid of ropes.

As decided beforehand, they were received by a number of comrades at a distance from the jail gates and escorted to a safe place. After staying there for a few hours, they left for their respective places for the fulfilment of their mission.

In this connection it will be interesting to note that certain "patriotic" Indian pilots came to J. P.'s rescue two or three times by carrying him to his destination in the Royal Air Force Planes. Some of these pilots, who were later taken into custody, are still believed to be behind the bars.

The climax of this interesting episode was reached when the jail officials came to know of the escape of J. P. and his companions, three days after the actual happening. It so happened that the Superintendent of the jail had to communicate some orders of the Central Government to J. P. A warder, who was sent to summon him, returned with the news that J. P. was not inside the jail. The Superintendent of jail treated it as a joke and reprimanded the servant for his impertinence. Another warder, who was then detailed, brought a similar reply.

The Superintendent of jail was at his wit's end. He immediately went inside the jail and raised an alarm signal. It transpired that not only J. P. but his four companions were missing from their barracks.

A telegraphic report was sent to the Government of India as a result of which both the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of jail were suspended. Both

The Red Fugitive

of them were prosecuted in a court but were discharged and reinstated.

After his escape J. P. roamed about in all the provinces in the country issuing directives to his party regarding the August 1942 movement.

II

TORTURE HOUSE

In an interview to the Associated Press of India Mr. Jai Prakash Narain narrated how he was treated in Lahore Fort which he described as Government of India's "torture house."

He said that he was kept in a cell for 16 months continuously. He was not allowed to meet or talk to anybody. He was interrogated for about 50 days at a stretch from 12 to 14 hours a day by C. I. D. who had specially been brought from different provinces. During interrogation, he said they poured volleys of abuses at him and the Congress leaders. During the last ten days of interrogation he was kept awake day and night and was not allowed to move from one place except for going to the latrine. While in the cell he lodged a protest that he should be allowed to exercise in the open. With great difficulty he was given permission, but was kept handcuffed while doing exercise.

He again made a protest and threatened to go on hunger-strike if his handcuffs were not removed while exercising. Later on he was transferred from the Lahore Fort.

Mr. Jai Prakash denied the reports that he was ever assaulted or made to sit on ice slabs.

He met on Saturday, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar

Bose Is Alive

Vallabhbhai Patel and several other members of the Working Committee.

In the evening he paid a visit to the late Shrimati Satyavati Devi's house and enquired about the progress of her memorial.

" BOSE IS ALIVE "

" I sincerely believe that Subhas Chandra Bose is alive ", said Mr. Jai Prakash Narain to an A. P. I. reporter.

III

ANOTHER STRUGGLE

" If the present negotiations with the Cabinet Mission break down, another struggle cannot be avoided," said Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, Congress-socialist leader to an Associated Press of India correspondent in an interview.

" I would take all steps to be fully prepared this time," he added.

Asked if independence could be achieved through negotiations and constitutional means, the Socialist leader said : " The talks with the Cabinet Mission are not the result of Good-will on the part of British Labour Government. It is the result of the greatest national upheaval since 1857 and also of outside pressure and world situation. "

Replying to another question Mr. Jai Prakash said : " We are on the stage of formulating our party. Congress-Socialist Party is part of the Congress. We must take stock of the present political situation and then formulate our plans. "

The Red Fugitive

When asked what was his view about the Communist Party, the Socialist leader said : " I consider the Communists to be " Russian fifth Columnists " and as such a perpetual danger to the country irrespective of what policy they may be following at a particular moment. "

Mr. Jai Prakash accompanied by his wife, Shrimati Prabha Vati, left for Benares ' en route ' to Patna.

MUSINGS AND COGITATIONS

From " The Tribune " dated 19-4-46.

" J. P.," as the Congress Socialists always love to call Jai Prakash Narain has for many come to possess a glamour second only to that of Netaji. Both made a firm unshakable resolve to turn the war situation into an opportunity to strike for India's liberation. Both persisted heroically in their endeavour when to others all seemed futile. Both remained loyal to the Congress objective of independence rather than to the programme sanctioned by it for the realization of that objective. Netaji escaped out of India and sought foreign allies for his endeavour. J. P.'s tale of glamorous adventure begins with his escape from prison and his starting secret activity in collaboration with those already ' underground ' since August 1942 though it is possible his story also has a chapter running beyond British India---to the Nepal border. Many await an authentic narrative of the jail-breaking and of J. P.'s subsequent adventures till his betrayal into the hands of the Punjab police with about the same keenness with which they recently read the stories narrated by Netaji's stay in Kabul as Zia-ud-Din seeking an opportunity to escape to Russia or to the Axis countries. A few perhaps await this authentic narration with more than mere curiosity---those suspected

Musings and Cogitations

or accused by their comrades of complicity in the betrayal—for in the Socialist circles, since J. P.'s re-arrest the worst accusation against a comrade has been that there were grounds for suspecting he had a hand in the great betrayal and of course nobody would have truck with Judas.

* * * *

Like Netaji J. P. at first sight is a man who talks little but ponders deeply. Both give one the impression of extraordinary earnestness arising out of grim determination. J. P.'s power lies not in seductive or persuasive radiation: talk it works rather like a silent magic which penetrates much deeper than talk. A talk with the C. S. P. friends and followers of J. P. often leaves one with the impression that in spite of all their seeming preoccupation with ideologies and theoretical discussion of doctrine and tactics the decisive influence on them has rather been the J. P. radiation. In a display of ideological and dialectical fireworks the Indian Communist often scores against them but I do not think the Communist leadership in India has yet thrown up a personality as radiant and magnetic as J. P.'s or with his penetrative influence.

J. P. is cast in the heroic mould. But he has also done a good deal of political thinking. In the C. S. P. thesis and programmes his contribution has ever been outstanding, though these documents have not always been crystal clear—have definitely suffered from compromises and confused thought—there can be no doubt. J. P.'s talents for political leadership are of a high order. In one of his acutest despatches analysing the failure of Wavell's Simla Conference, Preston Grover of the A. P. A. deplored the shortcomings of Indian leadership which was not able to get out of the stereotyped grooves, he also mentioned that many hoped for something better from certain younger leaders and he mentioned Jai Prakash. That must have come as a surprise to many—a delight-

The Red Fugitive

ful one for many of my Brother Freebooters. Yes. J. P. is rich in promise for to-morrow's India.

* * * *

J. P. And A. P.

"P" as second initial seems to be a magic letter. T. P. O'Conner is of course the classic illustration. For long decades "Tay-Pay" had unique popularity in the British Parliament and the British Press. In the Indian Press "C. P." at one time became nearly as familiar for the present Dewan of Travancore. That was in the good old days of Mrs. Besant and the Home Rule League. On a far smaller scale the present Food Member enjoyed this advantage when he took over "The Pioneer" and to the staff of that paper was known as "J. P." I do not mean to compile a comprehensive catalogue: that "J. P." inevitably leads on the musing to the other owner of the "P" talisman in the Socialist Party---for Achut Patwardhan has now come to be known as "A. P." to his comrades. At the moment I believe among the Congress Socialists he is next to J. P., the most important figure to reckon with---though I must add this ranking in no way means that Acharya Narendra Deva does not continue to enjoy the respect and veneration that as a veteran and a scholar has always been shown him, and that in the inner council Purushottam Tricumdas's influence will no whit diminish. The return of J. P. and A. P. is a great event in the leftwing politics.

* * * *

It is a somewhat paradoxical bit of news for me that at the "welcome" meeting in honour of A.P.'s re-appearance in Bombay, the chairman of the occasion, Purushottam Tricumdas, had to point out that the B. P. C. G. refused to have anything to do with it. If it is merely a sectarian interpretation of 'ahimsa' that actuat-

Musings and Cogitations

ed this boycott a Freebooter naturally finds it difficult to swallow the ethic which permits Congress leaders including Azad and Nehru to be so ardent in their welcoming back Mrs. Asaf Ali but does not let the organisation associate in the welcome to A. P.

* * * *

After his arrest by the Punjab police, as is well-known. J. P. was for a longish period detained in the Lahore Fort. As from Caveeshar and so many others, this Bastille has earned a high chit from J. P. who calls it the "House of Torture". Perhaps the worst horror story I have come across in public print regarding the happenings in the Lahore Bastille is the one in which I read :

"I was conducted through the historical gate of the Lahore Fort on October 1, 1945, at about 11 p.m. Next day I was produced before a police officer heavily drunk, who forthwith started showering foul and filthy abuse without rhyme or reason, not sparing the shining stars on the Indian political scene, naming one and all from Gandhi to Gopi Chand.

"The climax came when he ordered my trousers to be pulled off and threatened me with something unnatural. My trousers were actually pulled off. I escaped, because an abrupt telephone call took him away and he never returned that evening.

"At another time I was secured to a chair handcuffed behind the back and was kept in that state for about 68 hours".

The writer is an M.A. and at the time of his arrest was Assistant Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce. Can such things be allowed to be condoned in a hush-hush manner? In the name of decency the allegation must be disproved or the criminals brought to book.

—A Political Freebooter

THE END

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